The Rev. Mr. Ellis

with the author's

kind regards

THE

RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST

DEFENDED FROM THE ASSAULTS

OF

OWENISM.

IN NINE LECTURES.

BY J. R. BEARD.

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TO

HIS RESPECTED FRIEND,

THE REV. JOSEPH HUTTON, L.L.D.

THESE LECTURES

ARE INSCRIBED

BY

JOHN R. BEARD.

ADVERTISEMENT.

OWENISM is the form in which the broken and scattered forces of Infidelity, not long since marshalled under the leadership of Taylor and Carlile, have rallied and found a temporary refuge and support. The degree of success which has attended on the efforts of its advocates, is owing, not more to the zeal they employ, than to the appeal they make to the deep dissatisfaction which exists among some of the working classes, against the religious opinions and institutions which prevail in society; a dissatisfaction which, arising in the main from actual religious corruptions, is nurtured and sustained by materials supplied from the works of *Voltaire* and *Paine*. Unhappily, such is the want of information in the mass of the people, that a self-confident and daring appeal to their passions and prejudices, their discontent and social discomforts, is sure of meeting with acceptance; and can, in many cases, hardly fail of divesting the mind of its religious impressions.

The following Lectures were prepared and delivered by the writer, in the hope of contributing some, however small, a means of checking the career of a system which, of all others, is, both in principle and in spirit, most hostile to religion. The aim has been, not merely to repel the attacks which Owenism has made, but to follow out one or two lines of the evidence on which the

religion of Jesus rests, and to present some views of it which appear to the author as acceptable to the intellect and the heart, as they are in unison with the teachings and the spirit of its divine founder. This remark is not to be understood as if the writer thought he had offered any thing in which the well-informed and cultivated Christian would discover novelty: it is enough for him if he has been able to present religion to the less informed, in a shape disencumbered of the repulsive dress in which it too commonly appears.

Nor does he profess to have exhausted any one of the topics of Christian truth on which he has written, for he considered it his duty to give a preference to those trains of thought and feeling which were least likely to encounter opposition, in the circumstances of the case.

There is a large and a most valuable class of persons—the teachers in our Sunday schools—who, by their position and connexions, are much exposed to the assaults of the partisans of Socialist infidelity, and whom it is of high importance to furnish with some means of self-defence. If any of them, and, indeed, any of our working population, should find suitable information in this small volume, the chief object of its author will be answered, and one of his highest wishes gratified.

Salford, February, 1839.

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LECTURE I.

AMONG the manifold evils of our present manufacturing and commercial systems, there are results which are not to be deplored in themselves, and which give promise of eventuating in a manner highly satisfactory to the friends of humanity. So long as the working classes were scattered over the country in agricultural pursuits, or here and there gathered in small numbers in our cities and towns, their minds, wanting collision and impulse, remained more or less torpid, and, in very rare instances only, rose to the dignity of individual thinking. Mental power was, in consequence, the heritage of the few whom nature and education favoured, and who were thus enabled to use the great bulk of the people as their passive instruments. No sooner, however, did the mechanical discoveries which have distinguished the last half century begin to bring masses of men together into one place, than the natural consequence ensued, in activity and fermentation of mind; the immense power of production of which the people found themselves capable, in conjunction with machinery, led to the formation, on their part, of a high estimate of their individual and social importance, which not only prompted an enquiry into their condition and their rights, but also encouraged that action of their mental faculties, which could not fail to augment their mental

power, and give a deep earnestness and intensity to their enquiries.

The result of their investigations could not be otherwise than highly unsatisfactory to the people. The might which slumbered in a peasant's mind had been suddenly awakened;—to behold what? A social position no less vicious than artificial;—a position which had, indeed, lost the outward bonds of the serfism of darker ages, but retained too many of its necessary consequences. The body had been freed from actual chains, but remained enslaved to social customs and necessities which kept the mind inert, made the affections gross, and held he spirit in the fetters of superstition. The privileged orders, having wielded the power of the state and conciliated the efficient co-operation of the priesthood, had secured to themselves the greater portion of the good things of the land, and left to the many scarcely more than the crumbs which fell from their table. And although, in the new creation of wealth to which the manufacturing impulse gave birth, the few were compelled, as the essential condition of their own aggrandizement, to allow the people no inconsiderable share, yet it was found, such was the inequality of social arrangements—that the great current of influence bore in favour of the opulent and the elevated, and to the detriment of the humble labourer. Here, then, we have, in the same mind, a sense of social disqualification and a consciousness of power: we have, in face of each other, ancient institutions and observances which favour the few, and deep and powerful discontent which demands the rights of the many. Such discontent could not be expected to be very discriminating in its judgments, and it therefore came to look with an eye of jealousy on every thing connected, whether accidentally or otherwise, with the causes to which it owed its existence. A species of class morality, therefore, has

arisen, which not only frowns with a threatening brow on existing social inequalities, but arrays itself in hostility against our domestic relations and our religious convictions. '*Owenism*' is not least among the consequences of this state of things.

Born of a spirit of philanthropy brooding over our social evils, it stands up in stern opposition alike to the good and the bad in our actual condition, and while its mission is to remedy the one, proceeds most unwisely to destroy the other. Its real and proper antagonist is the feudalism in which society is still deeply embedded, but its blows are indiscriminately aimed at the very religion which has taken from that feudalism some of its worst qualities, and will, I have no doubt, work society free from its direful evils.

From these remarks it will be gathered, that I entertain no hostility to any rational attempt which the people may make with a view to better their condition. On the contrary, I wish them every success; and though I have my doubts whether the economical arrangements proposed for adoption in the 'New Moral World,' would prove much better than delusions, yet so fully aware am I of the infelicity of the actual condition of the people, and so firmly am I convinced that their salvation must, in the main, be wrought out by themselves, and moreover, so well do I augur of at least the indirect results of any honest and earnest effort after social improvement, that I, for one, not only have no quarrel with the disciples of the 'New Moral World,' in their attempts to better their condition and the condition of the many, but can do no other than look with interest and hope on their undertaking. But when I find that, in pursuit of their proposed social reforms, they strike at what I consider the most sacred principles of religious and moral truth, I feel an impulse which I cannot resist, to assume a defensive position; and while I attempt to shield important truth

from the rude assaults of error, to utter a voice of warning to those, and especially the young, who, in their zeal to effect social ameliorations, are hurried onwards into the dark gulf of moral and religious infidelity. And it is far more in a spirit of sorrow than of anger, of that charity which loves humanity too well to be harsh even in the exposure of its most injurious errors, that I would address myself to the task. I am not unaware of the influence of the circumstances in which I am placed, and on that very account I entertain a hope, that in proceeding to offer some defence of the religion of Jesus Christ, I have no prejudices to gratify, no interests to serve but those of truth, and no desire but to benefit my fellow-creatures. What I shall present to your consideration will be my own honest convictions, and though you may conclude by thinking me wrong, I trust you will have no reason to declare me perverse. I claim no authority but such as truth may be found to confer, and appeal to no tribunal but the faculties and sympathies with which my hearers are endowed. Give an impartial, if not a favourable hearing to what I advance; let it enter as an element into your considerations; carry on your enquiries with diligence; deal honestly and faithfully with evidence; judge calmly; determine cautiously; keep your minds ever open to new light, and disallow every authority but that of your own convictions. The result must be beneficial.

My business is, to defend the religion of Jesus Christ against the assaults of what is termed *Owenism*. It may be well, therefore, in the outset, to say a few words in explanation, respecting these two influences.

It is the religion of Jesus Christ that I propose to defend. You will understand that I make a distinction between the religion of Jesus Christ, and prevalent Christianity. To prevalent Christianity I am in no way pledged, and the defence of it I leave to its adherents. The attachment I profess is to none of the outward, to

none of the popular forms of Christianity, but to that view of the religion of Christ which I have been led to form. It is only my own convictions that I can be expected to maintain; and if those convictions either agree not with the opinions of other professed Christians, or prove less open to the shafts of the unbeliever, I can have no other feelings but one of regret, that my fellow-disciples should, in my mind, be involved in error; and of rejoicing, that I have found a path of security as well as of confidence. And I cannot but add, that I deplore the fact that while all true philanthropists may find in the religion of Jesus both light and impulse for their divine engagements, the constructor of the 'New Moral World' should have not merely thrown away the power which it would have given him, but arrayed himself in an attitude of most determined hostility to its truth and influence. Such, however, is the fact, for Owenism presents itself as the dire antagonist of the religion of Jesus. Whether or not its author has ever studied that religion in its own unadulterated qualities, I am unable to say, but certainly his hostility is as indiscriminating as it is decided. To no small extent, indeed, is Owenism, in its bearing on religion and morality, an attempt to erase all the impressions which hold the first rank in the religion of Christ. It sets aside, with no gentle hand, the disclosures which it makes respecting the Deity, a future life, man's responsibility, and the sanctity of marriage; and ascribes to the prevalence of the Christian religion most of the evils which infest society. 'In one thousand eight hundred and eighteen,' I quote Mr. Owen's words, 'I proclaimed that ignorance and error, crime and folly, had their sources in the different religions of the world.' 'I now denounce the marriages of the old world, as I then denounced its religions.'*

* 'The Marriage System,' p. 13.

Such, in brief, is the character of the assailant whom I would endeavour to repel. I offer no apology for entering on a task, which, howsoever unpleasant, the actual condition of society, at least in this vicinity, seems to render necessary; and if I can succeed in rescuing one person from the demoralising tendency of this new philosophy, or show one person a safer and more useful path, I shall consider my efforts not ill rewarded.

The course of Lectures on which I am entering, is laid out so as to embrace the chief points on which Owenism appears as the assailant of the religion of Christ. As a basis of my observations, I take my stand on the Christian Scriptures; and their authority, in consequence, I am in the first place required to assert.

You will observe that it is the Christian, not the Jewish Scriptures, with which I have to do. I am a Christian, not a Jew; I defend the religion of Christ, not that of Moses. These Scriptures are various in kind, put forth by different authors, at different times, and for purposes more or less dissimilar in each case. Some are histories—some are letters. The histories it is which profess to give an account of what Jesus taught and did; and on that account, and also for the sake of definiteness in my remarks, I shall confine myself to the explanation and defence of their authority.

Let me premise, that we must not look for a kind of evidence of which the subject does not admit. It is one of the evils of the want of a good system of popular education, that in a case of such consequence as the authority of the Christian Scriptures, persons have, in each individual instance, to be the judges, who have not been accustomed to similar enquiries, and are therefore scarcely in a condition to recognise the features of truth, or to discriminate truth from falsehood. A mind that has been trained to investigations into the genuineness of ancient books, is at once more likely to be satisfied

with sufficient evidence, and less likely to be deluded by false appearances. One thing, however, must be borne in mind,—that the question in regard to the authority of the Gospels is as much an historical one, as the question relatively to the authenticity of Cicero's Letters, or Virgil's Poems: the question in both cases is substantially the same, involving similar enquiries, depending on similar evidence, and leading to similar results. You may therefore enter on the subject of the authority of the Gospels without any of those prejudices which are apt to rise, in some minds, at the idea of religious investigations. There is no requirement of implicit faith, of belief without evidence, or of assent to mere authority. The Gospels are histories; and by the laws which determine the trustworthiness of histories in general, must they be tried. We but ask for the same measures of judgment in their case, as are observed in respect of any other ancient writing. If they are unable to abide this test, let them be disallowed; but, equally, let not a less impartial and a more rigid tribunal be erected for them, than that by which other histories are tried.

In thus considering the Gospels as histories, I forego the claim of infallibility which some Christians have preferred, on the ground of an alleged inspiration on the part of the Deity, which dictated to the writers, not merely the facts, but the words of the narration. For myself, I can find no warrant for such a claim. The books themselves make no such pretension. The authors do not declare themselves inspired. On the contrary, the books present every appearance which history ordinarily wears, and the writers profess to found their statements on such human knowledge as they had of themselves, or acquired from others. Why then should we force upon them a claim to which they prefer no title? Nay, nothing but an irrational and undue reverence can have suggested, or can still uphold, a charac-

er which, like that of infallibility, is exploded by the unquestionable errors and discrepancies which are found in the narratives. Into illustrations of these statements this is not the time to enter. I make them in order that it may be distinctly understood, that I really consider the Gospels as histories, and would have them judged by the ordinary rules of historical criticism.

If, then, this is their character, all I am concerned to substantiate is, that they contain a narrative of real events; and you effect nothing against my position by adducing evidence to show that any one of these histories presents mistakes, and that all, taken together and in comparison, offer diversities in some parts of their narrative. Where is the history of which the same may not be affirmed? What event, at all complex in its nature, have any two historians narrated in precisely the same manner? Each writer has his own point of view, perhaps his own particular object, which, if he were liable to no errors from the infirmity of his nature, would of a necessity make his story in some respects different from that of a fellow-labourer. And so far are the few diversities which are found in the histories of Christ from invalidating their authority, that they serve to show that no collusion existed between the writers, that each gave his own independent testimony to the facts in question. Were there no errors in these books, we should have to deny their purely historical character; and were there no diversities, we might not unreasonably suspect some plan for imposing on mankind. All, then, that I could even wish to establish is, that the Gospel histories are substantially true. Agreement in material points, with diversity and even discrepancy in minor details, are the essential conditions of historical truth. Such are the qualities by which the canonical histories of Christ are distinguished; and so far are these qualities from impeaching their trust-

worthiness, that in their case, as in every other, they are no slight presumption that the books contain an account of real events. The objection, therefore, of the unbeliever is converted into an evidence in their favour.

Now in respect of ancient works in general, the decision of the learned respecting their genuineness is considered satisfactory. Those whose lives are given to study, are held, and properly held, to be not only the best, but the only competent judges in such a matter. What working man thinks of inquiring into the authorship of Xenophon's Life of Socrates, or Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire? Paine's Age of Reason is received without a suspicion that it was not written by the person to whom it is ascribed. I hear no doubts expressed of the authorship of 'The Book of the New Moral World.' Socialists receive, as much without a suspicion as without enquiry, the very works on whose authority they are wont to assail the Gospel histories. Why should an opposite course be pursued in relation to the histories of Christ? If the sanction of the learned—if common repute is considered sufficient in one case, I see not why those who have at the best very insufficient means of judging, should act in a reverse manner in respect of the other. Let it not be supposed that I am attempting to deprecate enquiry. I only wish that you should not be partial in your conduct. The enquiry has been made—made under the most diverse influences—made of old, and in modern times, by enemies as well as friends—by enemies whom few in these days can surpass in virulence, and none equal in opportunities; and the result is, that the trust-worthiness of the books has not been overthrown. Why, then, should the question still be mooted? Why should their truth be still made an open question?—especially by those who, at the best, can possess only very partial knowledge, and scarcely any experience, on such a matter? At all events, if the

subject must be kept perpetually under debate, let the question be made general, let your enquiries be into the evidence by which the trust-worthiness of all ancient works is ascertained. This is, in fairness, required. A spirit of scepticism may easily find, or make, grounds of suspicion. Who knows that even such a person as Mr. Paine ever existed?—or can place it beyond the possibility of a question that he wrote 'The Age of Reason?' Were I to deny both, Socialists might find the proof more difficult than they think; but they would have no right to complain of the application to themselves of the same argumentative measures, as they apply to the records of the Christian history. The wonders which characterise the career of Napoleon may each be made, in the hands of an inveterate doubter, or a skilful critic, so many grounds for denying his existence, and for impeaching the truth of the narratives in which the improbabilities of his history are found recorded.* Let unbelief, then, hold an even balance. Let her take up a consistent position; let her question, or deny, the credibility of all the productions of former days; and soon would she find, by her investigations, that there is far less evidence in favor of most of these works, than for the histories of Christ. But, in reality, the decision of the learned, whether for or against the authenticity of ancient works, is altogether worthy of our confidence, and by no means least worthy in respect of the Gospels.

It cannot be denied that the Evangelical histories are in existence; as little can it be denied that their existence can be traced back into the first ages of

* 'Historic Doubts relative to Napoleon Buonaparte,' published anonymously, but since acknowledged by Archbishop Whateley; 'in which it was shown that the existence of that extraordinary person could not, on Hume's principles, be received as a well-authenticated fact, since it rests on evidence less strong than tha which supports the Scripture histories.'—*Whateley's Logic*, p. 31.

Christianity. Now what but their value should have led to their preservation? What but its value preserves any work from oblivion? A manuscript is not a temple, nor a mountain, to withstand the ravages of time. Few things are of a more perishable nature. Why have the poems of Homer been transmitted to the present day? Would men take any account of that which they judged worthless? The Gospels, then, have come down to us because men set a high estimate on their contents. But how could they have formed such an estimate, unless they had reason to believe in the substantial truth of their narrations? It is altogether a mistake to suppose that they were the fabrication of priests, or that they were at the first under the special care of a priesthood. This may have been the case with the sacred books of other nations; it is not the case with the Christian histories. Their writers, as well as the distinguished personage of whom they write, were the moral and spiritual reformers of their day, and the books were universally received by poor and uneducated Christians long before they came into the keeping of a clergy. How could these poor and uneducated people have been led at first to receive them as of authority, and to transmit them from father to son, except they had been satisfied that they really were what they professed to be? Consider them as fabrications, and you have the miracle to account for, that men and women in all parts of the civilised world, agreed from the first, and in subsequent ages, to receive and preserve with pious care, that of whose trustworthiness they knew nothing. Spurious narratives did indeed exist; but their spuriousness was known, their authority disallowed. The tares were separated from the wheat, and that, too, not by any clerical decision, but by the general voice of believers. The ground of their condemnation was that they were not generally received. They fell into neglect and soon passed into an almost total oblivion, because they wanted the sanc-

tion of the earliest ages, and presented incongruities with the universally received accounts.

Nor are you to suppose that the preservation of these books was an easy matter. It had to be effected in face of the most determined and deadly opposition. Property and life were perilled, and not seldom lost, in the attempt. In fact, it was not by, but in opposition to a priesthood, a most powerful, unscrupulous and persecuting priesthood — that of Paganism, that they were kept from destruction. It is equally true that there were causes which might have set them aside within as well as without the church. From the earliest ages, great diversities of opinion have agitated the communities of Christians. Yet were these books universally received, and their essential integrity was maintained in all parts of the Christian world, in the East, the West, the North, the South. Whatever varieties of opinion obtained, and how eager soever any party were for the establishment of their own notions, all were uniform in their sanction of the Gospel histories, and none impeached the authority to which their antagonists appealed. And when you call to mind the bitterness which sectarianism has always evinced, how—except on the supposition of the unquestionableness of the authority of these narratives, can you account for this universal agreement? Those who had not only the best opportunity, but also most stringent reasons for invalidating the authority, or putting an end to the existence of these histories—the sectaries within the Church, and the heathen without, were unable to set them aside; and well therefore may we receive works which have passed safely through so fiery an ordeal. Indeed, in the whole circle of ancient literature there never were books which encountered so much hostility, or stood so severe a test; nor are there any for which there is either so much, so diversified, or so concurring testimony. Disallow the Gospels; you have no ground on which to believe any historical narrative whatever. Whatever opinion you

may entertain of particular passages in the Gospels, or whatever theory you may hold respecting their origin, you cannot—except you are ignorant or wilful, or except you are prepared to erase the memory of the past—you cannot refuse to receive these histories as containing, in the main, an account of the teachings and doings of Christ.

Again; the existence of the Christian religion is an undoubted fact. Its influence can be followed up as the course of a river from the ocean to its mountain bed. An origin it must have had. Can any other be assigned than that which is presented in the Christian histories? Does profane history present a different explanation of the event? Christianity may have arisen in a comparatively obscure part of the world, but it very soon forced itself on the attention of the Roman Empire, and ere long levelled its superstitions with the dust. It is an historical fact, that before the end of the first century its prevalence became an object of earnest solicitude to the Emperors of Rome themselves, and that its professors were subjected to penalties and persecution at the hands of Roman governors. Can you believe that the priests and the learned men were blind or indifferent to its rise and progress? If they could have exploded its pretensions, had they not the will? And whose ability equal to theirs? Argument would have been a more effectual weapon than the prison, or death. And if violence was employed, we may be well assured that reason was either wanting, or proved insufficient. Now what more easy, if the Christian histories contained an imposture, than for the Roman authorities to have had it detected, and to have had the real facts recorded in the pages of contemporary history? Was this course pursued? Does contemporary history present a different account from what we find in the Gospels? On the contrary, the historian Tacitus and the historian Matthew agree in the main facts which narrate the origin of Christianity, though of course they vary in the coloring which they

throw around them. Tacitus, who must have been born about twenty years after the death of Christ, inasmuch as we know he married in the year 77, and in the years 88 and 97 had attained the highest offices which a subject could hold in the state—Tacitus, in speaking of the crime of the Emperor Nero in setting the city on fire, which was done in the year 64, about the very time when the Gospels were written, uses these words—words in which the rise and progress of Christianity are recorded in exact accordance with the accounts in our books;—'To suppress, therefore, this common rumor (of having set the city on fire) Nero procured others to be accused, and inflicted exquisite punishment upon those people who were in abhorrence for their crimes, and were commonly known by the name of Christians. They had their denomination from Christus, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death as a criminal by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, though checked for a while, broke out again, and spread not only over Judæa, the source of this evil, but reached the city also; whither flow, from all quarters, all things vile and shameful, and where they find shelter and encouragement. At first, they only were apprehended who confessed themselves of the sect; afterwards a vast multitude, discovered by them: all which were condemned, not so much for the crime of burning the city, as for their enmity to mankind. Their executions were so contrived, as to expose them to derision and contempt. Some were covered over with the skins of wild beasts, and torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified; others, having been daubed over with combustible materials, were set up as lights in the night-time, and thus burned to death. Nero made use of his own gardens as a theatre upon the occasion, and also exhibited the diversions of the circus, sometimes standing in the crowd as a spectator, in the habit of a charioteer, at other times driving a chariot himself: till at length, these men, though really criminal, and deserving exemplary punishment, began to be com-

miserated, as a people who were destroyed not out of regard to the public welfare, but only to gratify the cruelty of one man.' 'Divers facts,' says the learned and judicious Lardner, 'of the evangelical history are here attested: that our Saviour was put to death as a malefactor by Pontius Pilate, Procurator under Tiberius; that from Christ the people called Christians had their name and sentiments; that this superstition or religion had its rise in Judæa, where also it spread, notwithstanding the ignominious death of the founder of it, and the opposition which his followers met with from the people of that country afterwards; that thence it was propagated into other parts of the world, and as far as Rome, where, in the tenth or eleventh year of Nero, and before, (that is, about 30 years after the crucifixion of Christ) Christians were very numerous; and that the professors of this religion were reproached and hated, and underwent many and grievous sufferings. Certainly, the great number of Christians at Rome at this time, and their sufferings, are two things very observable.'*

Did time permit, it would be easy to show, from the collections made by the same impartial and indefatigable writer whose words I have just cited, that the civil and social state of Judæa, as described or implied in the Christian histories, corresponds not only in leading circumstances, but in minute details, with what we know it was in the first century, from the evidence of independent witnesses. Were this the place, I might also prove, from the peculiarities of dialect in which these histories are penned, that they were written in Judæa, within the first century, by persons who must have been Jews, and that they could not have been produced under any other circumstances. Such, then, being the case—as these histories are thus found to correspond in essential particulars with unquestionable facts, and to give an account which is known to be

* Vol. 6, p. 628; Edition 1827.

true, and as no other account of the rise and progress of Christianity is in being, do they not prefer a strong claim to be considered trust-worthy, and can we justifiably supersede them, without doing an injury to the authority of history in general?

Then open any one of the Gospel historians, and peruse the narrative. If you have an impartial and a practised eye, you cannot fail to discern numerous and indubitable tokens of reality. Perhaps your mind, from its associations, is rather struck and offended with modes of thought, and forms of speech, that are alien from modern usage. But reflect a moment. Is not this very objection a proof of the antiquity of the writing? The book is alleged to be nearly two thousand years old, and to have been produced by a Jew, an unlearned Jew, who professes to narrate the public history of a Jewish peasant. What, under these circumstances, is it natural you should find, but many things clothed in a foreign dress, and even things 'hard to be understood'? Of course, the age in which Jesus appeared—as every age—had its peculiar phraseology, its manner of seeing human duties and relations, its rationale of disease, its philosophy, and its errors. It was not these things which Jesus came to correct, but to pour a new stream of moral and spiritual life into the heart of the world. And in the execution of his work, he could do no other than employ the current moulds into which thought and speech had run. Opposition enough—opposition that ended in his death—he called forth by his moral efforts; had he also attempted to correct every mistake of a popular philosophy, and 'run a tilt' at every erroneous word he encountered, he would effectually have barred himself out from the minds of his countrymen, and even failed to have his language and his purpose comprehended. He took, as he was compelled to do, existing phraseology as he found it, and based thereon the instructions which were the foundation of his kingdom, and the principles of a great social and moral reform. In this he did no more

than every teacher of new doctrines must do. Our own language is full of the relics of an exploded philosophy. We still speak of the rising and the setting of the sun. We still use words which imply that madness is caused by the moon, or the influence of the souls of the departed in the bodies of the living; 'Lunacy' implies the one, 'Maniac' the other. The errors are gone, the phraseology remains; and perhaps some two thousands years hence, should all our literature have perished but some three or four brief histories, and some dozen letters, there may arise men who will maintain that we were ignorant of Astronomy, and visionaries respecting the origin of mental disorder. Nay, should—which is not *very* probable—but should the sole surviving books be some from the pen of Mr. Owen, a skilful critic would easily be able to show, from his very language, that he labored under the grossest errors. For instance, he is very much given to make against his countrymen the charge of hypocrisy. All who differ from him are hypocrites. Now, in its original signification, this word hypocrite denotes a player. So that the learned doubters of two thousand years hence will bring against him the charge of representing a whole nation as consisting of actors: and those—if any—who undertake his defence, may gravely adduce in his justification the authority of Shakespeare, who declares in express terms,

> '——————All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players.'

Or in your perusal of the history, you may feel revolted at the accounts of miracles with which you meet, and throw the book at once aside, as unworthy of your notice. But do not be satisfied with a first view. Go a little beyond the surface. Look into the details, and the character of these miracles. I am mistaken if you will not find in both reasons for hesitation. Here, too, there are difficulties; but the accounts, setting aside for a moment, their miraculous nature, bear the impress

of reality, in the naturalness and the minuteness of the circumstances, as well as their general accordance with the character and circumstances of the distinguished personage who is represented as performing them. If ever a course of action bore the form and pressure of benevolence, it is the conduct of Jesus Christ in his miraculous deeds; and the true philanthropist, so far from being averse to the exercise of this divine love, could only wish that similar individual disorders in the present age should be met by remedies of the same efficacy.

But there is an historical fact for which we have to give a reason. The Christian religion, promulgated in a remote and despised corner of the world, under the auspices of a few Jewish peasants, though resisted unto death by the authorities of the land, and abandoned for a time even by its own partizans, made its way, before its founder had been dead more than half a century, into the most civilized cities of the world, shook the temple of a once omnipotent superstition to its base, awakened the anger of a predominant philosophy, stood in the arena as a competitor for universal empire, and ere long took its seat on the throne of the Cæsars. Look at the meanness of its origin, the impotence of its instruments, and the rapidity and grandeur of its triumphs; look at the array of powers which were set to crush it; and then say, if, in the calmness of your mind, you can account for its prevalence in the first ages, apart from the admission of miraculous assistance. You are a philosopher, and know that every effect requires an adequate cause. Explain this effect, without the supposition of supernatural agency. To do so, history, experience, the principles of human nature, afford you no competent aid; and where the learning, power of intellect, and covert malice of a Gibbon have failed, you may well find it impossible to adduce any reasons which, though designed to set aside the influence of miracle, shall not carry the reflecting

mind back to it as the cause of your alleged, but insufficient causes.

With these explanations, I am content to put the question of the truth of the Evangelical narratives to the decision of any man of ordinary cultivation. The stamp of reality he would feel to be on every page. Most of the scenes, he would be satisfied, must have occurred. The picture is a transcript of actual life. The men and women of the Gospels; the junctures in which they are placed; the sentiments they utter; the feelings they experience or express; the incidental touches of nature which not seldom present themselves; the congruity of the language employed with the peculiar circumstances of the individuals,—circumstances regarding their age, their rank, their condition, their country,—these and similar things give the mind an assurance that it is a real history we are perusing, or rather permit not a suspicion to enter the mind of its being a fiction. It is no difficult thing for even an ordinary reader to distinguish between the features of reality, and those of invention; and the readiness with which the narratives of the New Testament enter the mind, and wind themselves round the heart of the sound-headed people of England, and especially the eagerness with which childhood receives them as true histories, and the sensibilities which many of the narratives awaken in their bosoms, are satisfactory assurances that the events spoken of really happened, and that the persons once appeared on the stage of actual life. Believing, as I do, that these features of reality occur in every page, I should find no difficulty in presenting several instances to your notice, but time compels me to be satisfied with requesting your attention to the account found in the 9th chapter of John's history, of the restoration to sight of the man born blind,—an account which, to my mind, is fraught with a real human interest, and bears, in every part, evidences of its truth. Indeed, I can hardly think any impartial judge will deny, that the feelings which he finds recorded

in the histories are, in the main, human feelings, the feelings of men and women like ourselves. Restore the circumstances, and he same emotions would again be experienced, and in substance the same language employed. Love, grief, and pity are as universal in their expression, as they are in their prevalence. There is no mistaking them wherever the realities themselves are found; and it is equally true, that to imitate their language, or describe their workings, is an effort of art which is rarely, if ever, attained in perfection. Look on the histories of Christ, and you feel at once that you have to do with a real chapter in human history, and not with an effort of the imagination.

It is a peculiarity of these books, for which the Christian ought to be grateful, that they are not a treatise, not a code of laws, but a series of human pictures, a transcript of actual life, a theatre of action, a leaf out of the book of man's destiny. They thus carry with them their own evidence; they make an irresistible appeal to our minds and hearts, to kindred thoughts and sympathies within ourselves; thoughts and sympathies which we have actually experienced, or which we know that in like circumstances we should experience. Thus the authority of the Christian Scriptures is the authority of human nature over human nature, the control of mind on mind, and heart on heart. And, except the natural emotions of our breasts are turned awry by prejudice, or polluted by iniquity, I must think it difficult for us to study these sketches, which are all over full of humanity, without feeling that our minds are in the midst of actual scenes, and conversing with real human beings.

Pre-eminently does this appear to me to be the case in regard to Jesus Christ. I know that he is represented in these books as surrounded by a brighter and holier light than that of earth. I know also that the virtues indirectly ascribed to him are superior in degree to those known to have been possessed by any other mortal. Still, humanity appears in deep and indelible lines in the

whole of his character and conduct. Through the veil of celestial radiance, you see the full workings of a human mind and a human heart. And for myself, I know not how any one can read many incidents recorded by his historians, and yet remain insensible not only to the reality of his character, but to its beauty, grandeur, and attractiveness. The appeal of the sympathies and charities of that holy and affectionate friend of man, would surely, but for the counteracting influence of prevalent corruptions, prove irresistible. However this may be, the character exists, the picture has been painted, and remains to all generations. It is a fact in human history for which we have to account. What shall we say of it? If not the representative of a reality, it must be a creation of the imagination. Consider it the latter;—does that abate your difficulty? The creation supposed is more wonderful than the actual existence. Could such a creation be the work of Jewish fishermen? I am bold to affirm, that the highest efforts of cultivated intellect have never produced a creation approaching in excellence —in truth to humanity, in grandeur of details, and in harmony of the blended whole—approaching in excellence to the character of Jesus Christ. Much less could it have been the fiction of men, who appear from their own narratives to have been unable to comprehend many of the best features of the character which they unconsciously pourtrayed.

My main position then is, that the histories of Jesus bear in themselves the impress of truth; for they appeal to the essential principles of our common nature. Whatever you may think of the miracles they record, you cannot deny that the histories present an aspect of humanity; sympathies which, in kind, are felt wherever a human bosom throbs; truths which are of universal acceptance, and of imperishable utility; a spirit, in a word, which harmonises with what is best in our nature, and would, if generally felt and acted out, prove the consummation

of man's happiness. This you cannot deny, except you are prepared to maintain that human nature has undergone, or will undergo, an entire revolution; that there are no essential features by which we can recognize the family likeness, and no moral principles on which we can augur the future, from the present or the past.

Beyond these claims of authority for the Christian Scriptures, I do not consider it necessary to proceed at present. I will ask you to study these books, to see whether these things are so or not. I will ask you to place yourselves in contact with the character of Christ; to meditate on his spirit; to follow him in his labors of love; to listen to the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth; to witness his tenderness to the young, his sympathy with the bereaved, his pity for mothers about to become desolate, the warmth of his friendship, the earnestness and elevation of his patriotism;—I will ask you, if he knew not how to rebuke the corruptions of the Priest, the iniquity of the Politician, and the craft of the Hypocrite;—I will ask you if he did not prove himself emphatically the poor man's friend, in word and in deed; if every form of human distress did not meet with succour at his hands; and if, while pouring out the full stream of his benevolence on the needy, the ignorant, the afflicted, and the sinful, he manifested hostility to any human thing, but moral and social dishonesty? Such was Jesus Christ. The contemplation of so holy and benevolent a character will, I must think, not only convince you of its reality, but bring home his virtues with authority to your breasts, so as to purify, refine, and exalt them, thereby increasing your happiness and the happiness of your families, and giving you strength and impulse in your efforts to further the improvement of society. And, for myself, I never expect to see the reality of any 'New Moral World' in any institution where the spirit of Jesus is not enshrined as its life-giving principle.

LECTURE II.

THE corruptions of Christianity are frequently pleaded in disparagement of its claims; and even in cases where the charge is not put into language, it is found to operate with a destructive power. Men take Christianity as it offers itself to their eyes, and finding much of a repulsive character mixed with it, they give themselves no trouble to separate the chaff from the wheat, but condemn the whole without discrimination.

I state a fact, I do not offer an apology. On the contrary, I think that such hasty and indiscriminating judgments are very alien from those qualities of mind which mark a genuine love of truth. Indeed, such conduct men would not yield to in any other concern but religion. If they wish to pursue a course of social policy which, in their opinion, the condition of their age and country and a regard to general principles require; —if they wish to become the disciples of any teacher of philosophy; nay, if they wish to enjoy the pleasures and advantages of friendship, they are not at once deterred by the appearance of disparaging circumstances, but carefully sift the matter before them, and where they are unable to separate the bad from the good, strike a just balance, and pass over to the side where the preponderance lies. But in religious matters, the ordinary rules of fair dealing are, with but too many persons, set aside. The labor of discrimination is refused; enquiry is abandoned almost as soon as it is entered on; and there are men who, in this high concern, applaud themselves for the very neglect which they would be among the first to

condemn in morals, philosophy, or business. Yet why? religion is either a splendid fiction, or the grandest truth which the human mind is capable of entertaining; and surely, while we are careful to employ all the energies of our minds in buying, selling, amassing riches, in devising schemes for social improvement, in deciding between rival theories of government, or conflicting schools of philosophy, we cannot do right, we cannot act consistently, if we refuse a calm and diligent investigation to the highest topic which can engage our attention. Such a refusal appears to me not only highly culpable, but to involve the very spirit of unfaithfulness. The worst state, short of vice, in which a mind can be, is one of unconcern respecting questions of the highest possible import;—questions which relate to God, duty, and eternity. These questions may have their foundation in error; but this no one can know for himself, who has refused to enquire: they may also rest on the most satisfactory basis, and lead on to the most salutary results; but whether they involve good or ill, the man must be wrong in regard to them, who either receive them without evidence, or rejects them without due examination. Mental honesty is the great quality which all who have the light of reason should, before all things, labor to preserve; and, for myself, I see no essential difference between the hypocrite who, to serve a purpose, affects to believe that of which he is not convinced, and the sceptic, who, under the impulse of his prejudices, refuses to enquire, or enquires only so far as he may find agreeable. Both are false; the one to his light, the other to his opportunities. The one professes what he does not believe, the other believes what he does not know;—I say what he does not know, for whoever declares that religion is false without due and faithful enquiry, makes a positive assertion while he seems only to deny, and entertains a conviction for which he has no sufficient warrant.

It is no exculpation to allege as an undoubted fact, that corruptions do prevail in religious concerns. For where are corruptions not to be found? When did truth pass unsullied through the hands of man? Is there a single department of the knowledge which pertains to our moral life, free from human corruptions? And, in general, the more important the interest, the deeper the stain. Go to the pages of the historian, you will find darkness mingled with light. Give ear to the lessons of the moralist, you will find what to reject, as well as what to receive. Mark the career of the politician, listen to his exposition of principles, and if your admiration should be kindled, your sense of right will also be revolted. Have not the dreams of Astrology been blended, if not confounded, with Astronomical discoveries? Will it be maintained that even Socialism is as pure in the rivulets which pour forth its influences around our villages, as in the fountain itself whence these tiny streams are understood to take their rise? It requires no depth of moral insight to discover the unworthy human passions which trouble and darken their waters; nor is the gift of prophecy necessary in order to foretel, that this new philosophy will assume another and still more repulsive character, so soon as the powerful benevolence is departed with which Nature has endowed its promulgator. Indeed, truth must of necessity take a coloring from the medium through which it passes. Look at the rivers, and ask yourselves what gives them their hue. Travel from clime to clime, and notice how the same light of the skies varies in its aspect. Mix among the different nations and races of men, and see what multiform changes the essential affections of human nature undergo. And does not the harvest depend on the soil no less than on the seed, and the effect of every lesson given, every page that is read, every moral and intellectual influence, take its character, almost entirely, in each individual case,

from the mind by which it is received? Truth—so far as it is prevalent among men, must of necessity consist, to no small extent, of the reflexions of their own mental and moral condition. This is a universal fact; and its consequences, in the corruptions which ensue, are no more a valid plea against religion than they are against morality. I know but of one branch of knowledge in which there is a transmission, from age to age, of pure, unadulterated truth. The mathematical sciences have to do with invariable relations, unambiguous terms, and strict demonstration; and therefore the teachings of a Euclid remain to this day unchanged after the lapse of centuries;—but in all other departments of knowledge, —wherever absolute certainty is unattainable, wherever the influence of interest or the affections intervenes, there variation is unavoidable, and declension the all but necessary consequence. It can, then, be no disparagement to religious truth, that it suffers in common with all other truth with which it is kindred. How should it not suffer? What but an inconceivable miracle could preserve a stream pure, which has, of necessity, to pass through impure channels? Let the disclosures of truth, at the first, be a transcript of the divine mind itself, yet as they must have been consigned to the keeping of human beings, what absolute guarantee can we have, that the light which is transmitted to us is the untinged and uncurtailed light of God? Every mind has its own vision, sees through its own prejudices and affections, and has therefore a view which varies more or less from that of every other. Uniformity of opinion is in consequence an impossibility. Variations there must be, and if variations, so corruptions. Nor can we ever hope to approach, in our own convictions, to the truth not only as it is in Jesus, but as it is also in Plato, or Socrates, the truth of present philosophy or past events, except we ascend to the fountain head itself; or, if we are com-

pelled to stop at any derivative source, except we make due allowance for whatever defilements the medium may have undergone. And if these observations are at all correct, so far from expecting to find a religion untarnished, which is two thousands years old, we should rather come to the enquiry with a presumption that, as it is now, so it was not in the beginning. The pure transmission of any moral influence is, so far as we can see, an impossibility; and it is the duty of every one who would be just to himself, and faithful to the claims of truth, to cleanse the religion of Jesus from the rust of ages, to purify the gold from its necessary alloy, and to be no less careful to receive and hoard the one, than to cast the other away.

And here the aid comes in, which the histories of Christ supply. They present us his religion in its first development. I do not affirm that the religion of Christ received no tarnish in passing through the minds and from the pens of its earliest recorders. But it does appear to me, that for their work they were the least exceptionable of all historians. Themselves unlettered men, with no bias from the preconceptions of philosophy, and no personal interests to give a coloring to their narrative, they were concerned only to set down what they had seen or heard; and obviously without being aware of the grandeur of the moral portrait which they drew, and without entertaining a wish either to recommend themselves by the embellishments of language, or to enforce their master's claims by defence or eulogy, they have furnished us with trust-worthy means of learning the great facts and principles which constitute the essence of Christianity. The phraseology they employed of a necessity took a hue from the currrent language of the day. A new system of religion had to be developed in forms of speech which Judaism had consecrated to its own service. And therefore any mode

of interpretation must be vicious, which deals rather with words than facts, with details rather than principles. It is the spirit of Christ and the spirit of his religion which we are concerned to know; and in the simple record of what he taught and did—of what he aimed to effect, and of what impressions he actually produced,—in the simple record of these things with which we are, beyond a question, furnished in his history,—furnished in a language as universal as it is now imperishable, we find all that is requisite to enable us either to distinguish the religion of Christ from its corruptions, or to make 'the pearl of great price' our own.

Now in proceeding to separate the pure ore from the dross with which it is mixed, we shall do well to consider the influences to which it was from the first subjected. The treasure was, of a necessity, consigned to earthen vessels. How could it fail to take a tinge and a flavor from the vase? The Acts of the Apostles, as well as the several Epistles, combine to make it clear that human passions and a prevalent philosophy began, in the earliest age, to blend themselves with, and consequently to defile, the religion of Christ. Nor are there wanting, in the Christian Scriptures, abundant evidence to show that its first missionaries anticipated a signal departure from primitive purity, when the power of the world came to have a decided influence on the Church.

But the leaven of corruption, in the case of the religion of Jesus, took a determinate character. It suffered not merely from the ordinary weakness and passions of humanity, but from influences which, to no small extent, were peculiar to the first periods of its existence. We know, as an historical fact, that the religion of Christ was entrusted to the keeping of Jews, and subsequently embraced by Roman and Greek idolaters. Here, then, we have *the Jewish element of corruption*, and *the*

Pagan element of corruption. Let us endeavour to trace the influence of each.

First, Judaism. I do not deny that it had good qualities—qualities which made it useful in the peculiar state of society in which it first appeared. None but those who are ignorant of the great lessons of history, will maintain that in any case, and certainly not in the case of the Jewish polity, civil or religious institutions can subsist for centuries, without having the power of conducing to human happiness. If it is true that there is no social polity perfect, it is not less so that there is none exclusively vicious. Let the good then of Judaism be allowed;—but I hold that it was providentially superseded; that when it had effected its purposes, Jesus Christ was sent into the world to plant in its stead a better and an everlasting system of religion. If so, there must have been qualities in Judaism which unfitted it for continuing to carry on the education of the human race. What were they? Judaism was a system of religious favoritism and jealousy, supported by pains and penalties. But here, in order not to be misunderstood, I must remark that I speak not so much of the Judaism of the law and the prophets, as of actual life. I do not seek to know what it might have been, nor what its eminent men would have made it, but in an attempt to estimate its influence in corrupting Christianity, I take Judaism as I find it in the days of our Lord. I say, then, that though it acknowledged Jehovah as the Creator of the universe, it regarded and worshipped him mainly as the national God of the Jews, jealous of all homage not paid under a certain form, and pledged to the furtherance and the eventual supremacy of the Judaical institutions. The Jewish nation, therefore, considered itself the peculiar people of God. All the rest of mankind were out of the pale of the divine favour, and objects of contempt and scorn to the special favorites of heaven. Jewish

ascendancy, in fact, was the idea which the nation most fondly cherished, and which it was their first aim to promote. Having arrogated to themselves the exclusive possession of the divine favor, they naturally proceeded to set the divine power in array for the furtherance of their fond notions, and in open hostility to the whole Heathen world. An inveterate bigotry was the necessary consequence. A system of the narrowest exclusiveness prevailed, together with a ceaseless longing and perpetual striving after universal empire. And as the mind of the rest of the world naturally proved refractory to these proud demands, and as the Jew believed himself alone in possession of the true faith, and as he held that his was a divine right to dominion over others, so he contracted a disposition not merely to proselyte, but to persecute. This leaven of unrighteoussness manifested itself in the presence of Jesus himself, and though calmly but firmly rebuked, yet knowing not what spirit it was of, it passed, in the breast of converts from Judaism, into the bosom of the Christian Church ; and ere many ages had elapsed, associating itself with the lower but most powerful passions of the human breast, at a time when the primitive and natural efficacy of the religion of Christ began to decline, it burst forth at first in a mitigated, but afterwards in a terrific form, and presented the unseemly and revolting sight of the disciples of the Prince of Peace engaged in inflicting injuries one on the other, and striving to advance a religion of self-denial and universal love, by compulsion, imprisonment, and death. This is the corruption which, of all others, has most retarded the progress of the religion of Jesus. It has checked not merely its outward triumphs, but undermined and not seldom destroyed its real influence within the Church itself. So foreign is it to the spirit of true and primitive Christianity, that wherever it has come it has blighted or withered its fruits. And from

the unhappy period when Orthodoxy and Arianism first drew the sword on each other, to the moral atrocities which Protestant ascendancy has committed in Ireland, this leaven of Judaical jealousy has harassed the Church, counteracted the spirit of Christ, and furnished Unbelief at once with its best apology, and its most effective weapons of offence.

But Judaism was also a system of pains and penalties. Fear was its master passion. Together with exalted notions of Deity, it ascribed to Him some of the lowest human passions. He was therefore represented as offended with his erring subjects, so that his wrath could not be appeased without suitable compensation. Hence arose a complicated ritual of atonements, whose design was to satisfy his anger, and render him propitious. Without shedding of blood there was, therefore, with the Jews no remission of sins. I am not unaware that similar ideas of the necessity and of the value of atoning sacrifices have prevailed among all ignorant and uncultivated tribes; and when one calls to mind that even among the classical nations, human blood was demanded as a needful expiation to the gods, one is justified in asserting that, severe as it was, the ritual of the Jews rather mitigated than aggravated this awful mistake. But as the influence of Judaism on the religion of Christ was more immediate and direct, I am disposed to think that this leaven of unrighteousness also passed from the Judaical institutions into the Church of Christ. Even the language of the New Testament itself wears a sacrificial hue; though I by no means think that the proper idea of an atonement is sanctioned by the Christian Scriptures. As, however, the writers of these books were of Jewish extraction, and had been nursed and reared in the use of sacrificial terms, they could do no other than convey to the world a system of mercy and love, in phraseology which, more

or less, wears the dress of a system of wrath and compensation. Subsequent ages have not distinguished the truth from the accidental investments in which, in some cases, it appears,—not separated 'the letter which killeth, from the spirit which giveth life'; and in consequence, the religion of Christ has had to labor under the corruptions which a belief in expiations has engendered.

Kindred with this source of evil was that principle of revenge and reprisals, which demanded, in cases of injury and offence, 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' Had the Jews indeed been equal to their institutions, this inhuman practice, a practice derived from the influence of a semi-barbarous age, would have been discountenanced and abated. But the authority of Christ himself shows us that it was in active operation in his day. Indeed his own death is, to no small extent, attributable to its prevalence. And though against no one of the powers of evil did he more firmly set his face, protesting against it both in express terms and by the first principles of his religion; yet being congenial with the lower passions of humanity, it gained a footing in his Church, arrayed itself in the form of an angel of light, converted the crosier into a sword, spoke from the pulpit, arrayed Christians one against another, and when it had created strife and confusion within the Church, went forth to the condemnation of the world, and sometimes to actual slaughter.

Out of these combined influences sprang the system of favoritism and exclusion which, though essentially Anti-Christ, assumed to itself the designation of Orthodoxy. Hence the apocryphal, not to say fabulous notions which, concreted into a system by the influence of the clergy and the powers of the state, appear before the world as the only true saving faith. From first to last it is a system essentially Jewish, and as such essentially one of retributory pains and penalties. For the

offence of one man—the great progenitor of the race, the Deity, in anger, condemns all to everlasting torture. The sin of the father is imputed to his innumerable progeny. An expiation is offered. Wrath is appeased. Man is rescued. But though the offence of one abounded to all, the merit of another in effect reaches only to a few. What began in injustice, terminates in cruelty, and the fate of untold myriads is everlasting woe. The imputation of that merit, in each case, depends on the reception of a particular creed; and therefore, inasmuch as it is better for man to suffer temporal death than eternal ruin, those who had the guardianship of this sole means of salvation, were not only warranted, but required, if there were need, to kill the body in order to save the soul. Persecution is not only the natural, but the necessary offspring of a system of partial salvation; and it is only so far as those who hold any form of belief to be the passport to the divine favor, prove unfaithful to the very essence of their doctrine, that they can become truly charitable and philanthropic, and thus enter into the spirit of the Master whose name they bear. Meanwhile, this unholy and inhumane influence, however clothed with a fair exterior, is still actively and powerfully at work in the outward Church of Christ, setting father against mother, and brothers against sisters, making a man's worst enemies those of his own house; fostering spiritual pride; requiring the prostration of the human intellect; preaching passive obedience and non-resistance; building up priestcraft and superstition on the basis of fear; and bowing many a gentle heart beneath an intolerable burden, or converting the religionist into the maniac. And though I am not the person to look with unconcern on the progress of infidelity, yet if its mission is, like that of the tempest in the natural world, to purify and refreshen the moral atmosphere around us, I must say we shall have no reason to regret, should it

be employed by a wise Providence to unbind these heavy burdens, to strike off these rankling fetters of the spirit, and set the captive free.

The corruptions which Judaism engendered are mostly of a moral nature; those which came from Heathenism are rather intellectual, and I must add, on that account, less injurious. This resulted in part from the fact, that while it was the practice and prevalent tone of Judaism which corrupted Christianity, on the part of Paganism the defilement came from a speculative philosophy, and a mythological creed. Compared with the intense moral feeling of the Jew, the Pagan religion was little more than an intellectual form. When, however, this influence of the head came to be united to the moral influence which Judaism imparted, it greatly increased the tendency to corruption; for by the appearance of wisdom which it wore under the name of philosophy, it supplied that in which the Judaical element was deficient, threw the shield of reason around the false shapes of feeling, and in this guise won the understanding by its adulations, and captivated the heart by its perverted sensibilities.

Paganism was a system of gross polytheism. It had deified not only the powers of nature, but the good and the bad in human character, and raised the vilest of mortals to share the throne of the universe. It is true that when, in the second century of the Christian era, it began to make itself felt in the Church of Christ, it had parted—at least as it existed in the hands of those philosophers who passed over into the Christian camp—it had parted with much of its grosser and more repulsive forms; yet it retained an influence over their minds which indisposed them to the bare simplicity of the religion of Jesus, made them fond of abstract and visionary speculations, and diverting their attention from the essence of Christianity which is eminently

practical, inclined them to find or make mysteries in their newly-adopted faith. He who had from his youth up been pleasingly engaged in curious enquiries respecting the essence of the gods, their orders and functions, and who had been trained to acknowledge an Olympus, on which there sat, in nicely graduated ranks, the celestial hierarchy, from the recently deceased Emperor up to Jupiter himself, could hardly be satisfied with the unpretending simplicity of the crucified man of Nazareth. Still less, perhaps, could the unenlightened rustic, and the ambitious citizen, bring into the Church of Christ hearts cleansed from all the sensual idolatries in which they had been educated. How great soever the change which the religion of Jesus wrought, it could scarcely exterminate every relic of heathenism from the breast, especially when, in the third and fourth century, its own power began to wane, as the splendour of the character of the deeds of Christ faded from the world. The rays of that sun must be comparatively weak which men read of, rather than see and feel; and so, as time passed on, many, there is reason to think, adopted the name of Christian, while they retained in their minds and hearts much of the influence of that Paganism in which they had been educated.

Scarcely, therefore, had Jesus left the world two centuries, before the crucified man was elevated into a secondary God; and the corrupting influence of polytheism continuing to grow in the Church, he was ere long first associated, and then identified, with his own Father, in conjunction with a third partner in the godhead; which three, however, mysticism, priestcraft and credulity declared to be one, alike different and the same, equal, yet not distinct. And as the Son was made coeval with the Father, so the Mother of God was placed on the highest step of their common throne, and a Jewish matron—the wife of a carpenter—

received religious homage from the civilised world. It might be thought that the force of corruption 'could no farther go'. But when once the best and strongest feelings of our nature are turned in a wrong direction, there is no fatuity of which they are not capable. Imitating the worst part of Heathenism, those who called themselves Christians proceeded to make dead men and women into demi-gods, whom they worshipped under the name of saints, and to propound to the world, and enforce on its reception, the most astounding of all absurdities, namely, that He who formeth the wind, keepeth the planet in his orbit, circumscribeth all space, and sustaineth the universe, was in some way transmuted into a wafer, and swallowed by his own creatures, and that not in one, but in ten thousand parts of this tiny globe.

If the Judaical element of corruption furnished what could not fail to wound the heart, Paganism surely gave forth enough either to confound and blind the intellect, or to call forth all its energies in active and determined hostility. And well can I imagine that an unbeliever of an ingenuous disposition, would feel that a regard at once to the Creator of the Universe and to his fellow-creatures required him to employ his utmost efforts against their united corruptions in credulity, superstition, and absurdity. And could he be justified in allowing these external clouds of the religion of Christ from concealing from his sight and his heart the light and warmth of 'the sun of righteousness', I for one should be disposed rather to applaud than to blame his zeal. Nor can I well conceive how such a system can either merit or receive a defence, except on the erasure of the fundamental principles of human reason, and the extinction of the strongest and best charities of the human heart. It is therefore with a sacred gratification I rejoice that the religion of Jesus has begun to work itself free from

these lees of Jewish and Pagan corruptions. The bright original, I have the holiest warrants for saying, will be restored; and of this we may be the more assured, because, though the costly pearl has been hidden in a mass of rubbish—has been marred and polluted, it has never been lost. The religion of Christ still exists in the world in the midst of surrounding defilements, diminished and most lamentably curtailed of its influence, yet not essentially changed. For we may be satisfied, that the corruptions to which I have alluded could never have maintained an empire in the human breast, had they not been associated with a holy and benevolent power. And I confess, that while the unbeliever derides Christianity on account of the corruptions with which it is blended, I can find no language to express the admiration I feel in considering the strength of counteraction which the good principle must have exerted, to prevent these powers of evil from exciting a universal revolt in the Christian world. But age after age men have found in Christianity a supply for their most urgent wants, a source of improvement which conduced greatly to their happiness; and therefore, notwithstanding its corruptions, they have firmly held it in their embrace. In this strong sense of its worth, this vividly-felt experience, has been the conservative power of the Christian religion; and but for this, the load with which human weakness and folly have burdened it, would long ere now have sunk it as lead in the ocean. The little leaven has leavened the whole lump with a title to man's regard and reverence.

The work, therefore, of the religious reformer is not to destroy a prevalent Christianity, but to cleanse it from existing impurities; and in his righteous efforts he has the invaluable aid of the divine original, as preserved in the histories of Christ. Let us, for a brief period, turn our thoughts to that original, in order to seize, if we

may, the fundamental idea of the religion of Jesus. What was his object, and what his means? I shall not dwell on any subordinate or secondary purposes, but endeavour to present the leading idea, the master thought, which animated the mind of Christ, and inspired and shaped his life. And when stript of all the casual associations of time, place and language, that idea seems to me to be this—to effect a great moral reform, which, taking its rise in individual excellence of character, should act beneficially on society, and lead on to, and eventuate in, the pure spiritual happiness of a life to come. These several effects were contemplated by Jesus as the great work he had to do, and they stood in his mind not as insulated and dissimilar results, but as parts of one connected whole, as links in the chain which bound social good with individual excellence, and the bliss of eternity with the happiness of time. In his mind there was no moral gulf between heaven and earth; nor did he teach that those would be saved hereafter, who had been sensual, unjust, or cruel here. With him, the whole of each one's being was a transition, a gentle passage from a life of sense (which, to a moral being, is rather death than life) to a life of pure and never-ending spirituality.

And here, before I proceed on this topic, I would, in order to prevent misapprehension, remark that I use the terms spirit and spirituality, to denote that state of the mind in which the intellectual and moral powers are raised to their highest pitch of refinement, and kept in harmonious and vigorous action by the presiding influence of the love of God within the breast, whether the result take place in this world, where its existence can be only partial, or in the next, where the education of each human being will be completed.

The great aim, then, of Jesus Christ was a new moral creation, with a view to the universal prevalence of

the highest happiness of man. In his own language, he came that we might have life, and that we might have it exceeding abundantly. Presenting himself as the light of the world, he aimed to dissipate the moral darkness of the human mind, and thereby to bring about the dismissal from the breast of all the idolatries of sense, in order that the faculties, being quickened by the rays of truth, might come forth purified from the dross of earth, in full and well-proportioned energy. The life, then, which Jesus purposed to give, was the kindling up of all the faculties of man, and the preservation and expansion of them to their highest possible reach throughout the period of endless being. The true life of man is in the ascendancy of the higher powers of his nature,—his reason, his moral feelings, those sympathies which make him rich within in the elements of happiness, and unite him in bonds of love and holiness with his fellow-creatures and his Creator; and the advancement of that moral supremacy, the subjugation of sense, and of all the lower passions which lead on to intellectual and moral death; and the completion of this great work in the formation of the human heart, after the image of God, man's will being blended with the will of his Maker, and his life made a steady out-going of the divine influence,—such was the one great purpose and effort of the life and teachings of Christ. In other words, he came to repress and annihilate the bad in human nature, and to call forth, strengthen, and perfect the good. He was the great moral educator, differing from other educators in the exent of his aims, and the power of his instrumentality, but having, like them, for his object, the improvement of mankind.

. Now it must be carefully noticed that Jesus began his work with individuals. He knew that thus only could he lay a basis for a solid and durable reform. To begin with masses and 'communities' may present a more imposing exterior, but must, in the main, end in dis-

appointment. The social whole is made up of its several parts, in such a way that the character of the whole is but an aggregate of the character of the parts; and until you have reformed individuals, you cannot reform societies. And no influence which you may attempt to exercise on masses, can be carried into effect with certainty, and will most probably fail in the majority of cases, because it cannot be varied so as to meet the peculiar wants of each individual. Besides, all such influence must, for the most part, be of an external nature; springing from without, and operating from without, it can touch but slightly the springs of our moral life. All genuine power for human reformation must be in-born. The quickening principle may be exterior, the life itself must be within. You may effectually deal with masses, when you use men as mere machines for labour or for war; but if you would bring about a 'New Moral World,' you must, as Jesus did, begin with individuals.

And in so beginning, it was to the inner man he directed his attention. This is a marked feature in the religion of Jesus, necessitated by the nature of the effect he designed to produce, which was not a mere conformity to any outward standard, still less, as with Socialists, the developement of the animal nature, but the regeneration of the heart, the calling forth and invigoration of its elements of moral and everlasting life. The purpose which he labored to effect was, to make each individual a law to himself, by leading him to the possession of a clean heart, a right spirit, a holy will, a deep respect for the noble capacities of his nature, and the high destiny which lay before it. He could not, therefore, remain satisfied with any external proprieties, but addressed his influences at once to the understanding and the affections, assured if these were only in a healthful and vigorous condition, the life could not fail to be right, nor the highest happiness, both corporeal and mental, to be

enjoyed, of which man is susceptible. That he did not disown the power of circumstances, nor fail to surround his disciples with the best influences under his command, his history places beyond a doubt; but his view of moral influence was not limited to any exterior instrumentality; he saw in the human mind itself, a power superior to all outward appliances, a power for good or for ill of overwhelming efficacy; and he therefore addressed himself at once to this mighty principle, the original of all the triumphs of humankind, whether physical or moral. Nor do I entertain a doubt, that any effort must signally fail which, disowning or undervaluing the native and independent power of the human breast, seeks the good of man by the external force of 'improved circumstances.' Some good may result—but as a remedy for our moral disorders, and especially if designed to work out the elevation of character which the religion of Jesus purposes, little else than disappointment can ensue. All effectual moral reform must be begun, carried on, and completed in the hearts of individuals.

Let it not, however, be for a moment supposed, that while Jesus aimed to benefit individuals, he forgot or neglected the mass. His aim was of the most extended character, as befitted one who came with a message of mercy from the Universal Father. Nor is it the least original feature in his character, that he formed the grand design, and took effectual measures, to make his influence co-extensive with humanity. Never did so large or so benign a conception enter a human bosom, as that which filled and moved his who taught, lived, and died for the salvation of the human race. His was the only true philanthropy, *the love of* MAN, of man as man, of man irrespectively of country, age, or time. Like all the gifts of the Common Parent, the love of Christ bore the stamp of universality. And wide as was his heart, so wide and comprehensive were the principles which he expounded. If it were not a divine truth, it

would be a moral wonder, that the son of a Jewish carpenter, who had received no earthly influence from beyond the narrow limits of the bigotted land of Judæa, should have risen to the sublime idea of a universal moral regeneration, and so taught and lived as to establish principles which, in their triumph, must eventuate in universal happiness.

For a moment cast your eye on the spirit which he manifested, and one or two of the great principles which he offered to the world, in order to give effect to the great idea which was the travail of his soul. He is a Jew. Does he flatter Jewish prejudices? Does he foster the antipathies of the nation? Does he encourage their fond hopes of religious supremacy? Excited and buoyed up as the Jewish people then was by the most pleasing and long-cherished visions, he might, had he chosen, have placed himself at the head of the popular stream, and probably been carried onward to a widely-extended earthly sway. He not merely does not seize the opportunity, he does not content himself with evading the current of national prejudice and pride, but he nobly sets himself to stem it. True, he paid his life a forfeit for his moral daring; but in failing to become a Jewish king, he proved the benefactor of the world. He opposed a narrow spirit of nationalism, in order to live a life and die a death of universal love.

He was the son of a peasant. Did he affect the favor of the rich and great? Was he ambitious of the adherence to his cause of the rulers of the land? On the contrary, two of the most decided features of his character were, the one, the boldness, the almost superhuman boldness with which he rebuked the scribe, pharisee, and priest, for their shameful misuse of power; the other, the extraordinary, the unparalleled devotedness of attention which he manifested to the poor, the ignorant, the outcast, and the sinful. His was emphatically a ministration of gentleness, peace, and love to the despised

and neglected cottagers of Judæa. The poor have the gospel preached unto them—was his own triumphant evidence of the divinity of his mission. No! the moral influence of Jesus was thrown into the right scale. The world, he knew, would love its own. Power and wealth then, as now, needed no factitious aid. They are idols to which men are ever ready to bow the knee. Jesus loved and reverenced humanity, and, therefore, made the great stream of his influence to bear in favor of the poor. His attachment was not to the garb, nor the rank, but to the children of God, to the world within the breast of each—that world, of all worlds the most important; and his only question therefore was, where there was the greatest need, and the best prospect of doing good.

It was in entire unison with his own most tender and truly philanthropic spirit, that he taught and enforced, in many varied forms, that first great principle of his religion, that God is truly the Father of the human race. The very word is in itself a revelation—the disclosure of a whole circle of truths, and of truths which bear with a most cheering and beneficial influence on all our earthly relations, and on all the hopes and prospects which we can entertain, whether for the life that is, or that to come. If God is our Father, then is love the presiding, governing, and shaping influence of the moral universe. If the God of heaven and earth is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, then all his designs and measures must be in kind merciful, forbearing, loving and tender, like the designs and measures of his well-beloved Son. If God is our Father, then whatever clouds and darkness may rest upon his dealings, or on our own individual lot, they can be no other than the needful discipline of a Father's wisdom and benignity, and will in time roll away, and issue in the prevalence of unmingled and universal happiness. If God is our Father, then, though we his children may prove recreant

to our relationship, and unfaithful to our opportunities, yet he resteth in his love, is ever ready to forgive, and waiteth to be gracious; and the idea of appeasing his wrath, or of suffering the infliction of endless pains, is only not impiety, because it is the offspring of an unwilful and pitiable human weakness. And finally, if God is our Father, then is that other grand principle of Christianity true and full of meaning, that all mankind are brethren. The paternity of God becomes the basis of the fraternity of man. I know no other ground on which the relation of human brotherhood can securely rest. The idea of a natural equality is a mere fiction, contradicted by undeniable facts. The reality of a social equality our own eyes assure us has no existence. But if it is true, as Jesus taught, that God is the equal parent of all, then all men are equal in his sight, all men are alike his children, members of his family, and possessed, in consequence, of equal spiritual rights, privileges, hopes, and destiny. Here, then, is a solid and satisfactory reason for cultivating a spirit of universal benevolence, and for doing good to all men, as we have, or can make opportunity: for being merciful, as our Father in heaven is merciful.

Another instrumental truth which our Lord employed was, as set forth by him, of singular and surpassing efficacy;—Jesus took the doctrine of a future life out of the region of mythology, and placed it in the precincts of well-established truths. He taught it not only by word, but by the fact of his own resurrection. And the word and the fact were as much unexceptionable and satisfactory evidence, as striking and efficient modes of instruction; since for the trust-worthiness of the one, we have the pledge of the character of Christ; and for the establishment of the other, the general conditions of historical credibility. Had so good a man as Jesus was, merely declared himself commissioned to assert man's immortality, we should have possessed a stable founda-

tion for our faith; but when both his assertion and his claims are verified by fact, — by the historical fact that he himself rose from the dead,—rose as the first fruits of the whole human family, then we have the highest proof of which the subject admits, and are warranted in fostering our instinctive desire for the perpetuation of our being into full and unwavering assurance.

And so is it also a fact, that the idea of a future state of being now prevails in society not only more extensively, but in a form far more definite and operative than at any period anterior to the birth of Christ. For its native efficacy, however, we must revert to the primitive ages of the Christian Church, when entering the heart in full power, and settling there, it became the principle of a new life, and gave, in many instances, a power of endurance, and a power of self-control, such as no other page of history records.

Nor, I am persuaded, will the unbeliever himself deny, that a firm belief in a future state of conscious being must be as efficacious, as to the good man it is delightful. No other truth can exert so ennobling and purifying an influence on the heart and life. All our faculties assume a new aspect, our domestic affections become holy, our duties and interests of unspeakable importance, our whole destiny as interesting as it is elevated, when we regard ourselves as born and being educated for eternity.

And now tell me whether it is possible for any mere prudential—any earthly considerations whatever—to recommend benevolence as it comes enforced to him who is a true and consistent believer in Jesus Christ? It is impossible to conceive of influences—circumstances if you will—so powerful as those which faith in him brings around the human being. The will of God; the purposes of his Providence; his mercy and love to each individual; the example and authority of Christ; the great issues of eternity, as well as of time,—all conspire

to make the Christian pure in heart, and compassionate, gentle, and beneficent in life. And you diminish, you all but destroy your power for good, when, by parting with the influence of the religion of Jesus, you descend to 'the beggarly elements' of mere earthly wisdom and philosophical speculations.

Christianity—as it exists—may be corrupt; aim to purify it: you may think it fails of the good you benevolently desire; apply it to the great purposes for which it was designed: men may hold it unrighteousness, or keep its light under a bushel; urge and lead them to be faithful to their trust:—but do not go about to destroy that which, of all influences, is surpassingly fitted to bless yourselves, and make you a blessing to your families and the world.

The great idea, then, of the religion of Jesus is, the education of man in such a manner, and to such results, as shall secure his highest possible happiness in all the faculties he possesses, in all the relations he bears, and in all the stages of existence through which he may have to pass.

And the means which Jesus employs for the attainment of this divine end, are his own most wise and benevolent example, and the great doctrines that God his Father, is our Father, and that all we are brethren;—that the whole world is as nothing compared with the worth and happiness of the spirit; that the love of God is our first duty and our highest pleasure; that its best fruits and only certain evidence is in our love of the brotherhood; and that as all God's measures are remedial, and not punitive,—salutary and educational, not wrathful and vindictive, so the realization of his will in the heart of each is the highest style of excellence, and the attainment of perfect peace and never-ending felicity; and so also the day must come, when sin, sorrow, and suffering shall be no more, but God, in that goodness which is the essence of his nature, shall be all in all.

LECTURE III.

So important do I feel it to be that man should possess the free and untrammelled use of his mental powers, so precious a right is mental freedom, so high the results of its unimpaired exercise, so many and so serious are the evils which have ensued from invasions of that right, that no consideration could induce me to offer a word of defence for any system, which, in my mind, encroached in the slightest degree upon it. And much as I value the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I could neither embrace it myself, nor recommend it to others, did I consider it anything but favourable to the freest and fullest employment of the higher faculties of our nature. Whatever appearances it might wear, and however prevailing might be its appeal to the human heart, I, for one, should not have a doubt that it was hostile to the real well-being of man, did I find in it any encouragement to bigotry and intolerance, or any sanction to the usurpations which Priestcraft has wickedly assumed over the human mind; and in such a case, severe as the struggle might be, I should undoubtedly consider it my duty to tear the pleasing delusion from my breast, and vindicate, even against my feelings, the inalienable rights of intellectual manhood. Nor do I hesitate to lay it down as a first principle, in relation to morals and religion, that nothing can be of God, not only that trenches on the liberty of the mind, but also, that does not guarantee and encourage the utmost latitude of enquiry. And while, for myself, I am resolved to maintain, as the dearest privilege of my nature, the unfettered exercise both of thought and speech, so would I advise you, not

only to think freely, and to speak honestly what you think, but to suspect evil in any system, however fair its exterior, which would throw the lightest trammel on the freedom of your mind. Had not the great Source of light intended you to employ your powers, without restriction, fear or penalty, apart from all dictation from man, or coercion from higher authority, He would never have given you the faculty of thought, nor planted in your breast the inextinguishable love of liberty. Nor is it possible, that any doctrine whatever should come recommended to man by a higher or more imperative sanction than attends on the simple circumstance, that the Great First Intelligence has made man in His own image, and imparted to him powers for his own enlightenment, impulse, and guidance. Deny man's intellectual freedom, and though you claim the gift of inspiration, you destroy and forfeit all ground to authority, and in seeking to enslave the minds of others, you array yourself against the primary and fundamental truths, on which only natural or revealed religion can be built. If man is not to be free to think, judge, and determine, that is, if each individual is not to follow his own light, then is there no ground whatever on which the Deity can make an appeal to the human mind; religion is an impossibility, and morality resolves itself into a cunningly devised fable—the invention of the few, for the subjugation of the many: or, at the best, the creature of imagination, prejudice, and custom. Mental freedom lies at the basis of all the truths which concern our duties and our expectations, in such a manner, that if the one be denied, the other can have no existence. And if the mental freedom of the race is thus guaranteed, so by implication is the mental freedom of each of the individuals of which it consists. Nor can there be any limitation in degree. The gift of thought is entire, unshackled, uncurtailed. The least trammel is the supercession of the faculty. Fetter one thought, fence up

one field of knowledge, you deny my right to freedom of mind; and if you claim the authority of Deity for so doing, you, in effect, declare that what God has given with one hand, he takes away with another, and may well be required to show what substantial warrant you can have for your claim of a divine sanction, which can in no case exist, except on the recognition of the freedom of the human mind. Then

> "Let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
> Abandonment of reason to resign
> Our right of thought,—our last and only place
> Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine:
> Though from our birth the faculty divine
> Is chained and tortured—cabined, cribbed, confined,
> And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
> Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
> The beams pour in, for time and skill will couch the blind."
>
> *Childe Harolde, Canto iv.* 127.

With these sentiments, I am not likely to offer defence or apology for any system, or any influence which interferes with the exercise of man's birthright of freedom of thought, and freedom of speech. On the contrary, I hold those to be amongst the best benefactors of humanity, who vindicate its intellectual privileges. Yet, let our condemnation fall not on the innocent, but the guilty. I ask not for generosity; for though in all cases I pity, rather than reprobate, the persecutor; yet towards the principles by which he is actuated, there is place for no other feeling than that of stern disapproval. But I ask for justice, I ask that your verdict should be against the real, and not the supposed criminal. And this evening, I appear before you to show, that the religion of Christ itself is not amenable to the charge of bigotry and intolerance. And my general position is, that these evils are the offspring of human passions, acting, not in accordance, but in direct hostility to the spirit and fundamental principles of genuine Christianity.

Before, however, I enter on the illustration of this position, I deem it desirable to determine, so far as my limits admit, the precise nature and amount of the evil for whose existence I have to account. It has been alleged, that Christianity introduced persecution into the world, as well as that it has proved its most effectual foster-parent. This I deny, and I deny also that persecution is peculiar to religion. And I assert, that except you admit my main position, namely, that bigotry and intolerance are the offspring of human passions, you make philosophy, as well as religion, obnoxious to the charge.

What is persecution? In general terms, persecution is the infliction of evil on account of diversity of opinion. If so, it is not limited to bodily pains and penalties. The dungeon, the cross, the rack, the burning pile, are the only forms of terror which the term persecution calls up in the minds of the majority of men. But there are tortures which are not less excruciating than those of the body, and these, persecutors, in all ages, have been but too skilful in the employment of. If you injure my reputation, because I differ from you in opinion: if you bar me out from any honourable pursuit in life; if you excite against me the finger of scorn, or set in action the lip of ridicule; if you interfere with my freedom of speech by wilful misrepresentation, and endeavour to frustrate my efforts for the furtherance of my sentiments, by ascribing to me opinions which I disclaim, and fastening on me a name odious in the eyes of the world, and repudiated by myself,—you, in each case, act the part of a persecutor; and would, it may be presumed, proceed to bodily severities, should circumstances give you the opportunity. It is the motive and the spirit which make the persecutor, rather than the act; and whoever is so intolerant of other men's opinions, as to be led to the employment of any other weapons of offence but those of fair argument, has in his breast the spirit of persecution, and yields to its in-

fluence so far as prudence permits. I do not affirm that all acts of persection are equal in atrocity; but since it is the motive which gives its color to our deeds, so the scoffer is no less amenable to the charge of persecution than the inquisitor. They differ rather in degree than nature; in power than in spirit. They both inflict evil, each as far as he dares, on account of diversity of opinion. Arm the scoffer with power, he becomes an inquisitor; wrest from the inquisitor his instruments of torture, he sinks into that common-place character—the social calumniator.

One of the most insidious enemies of Christianity, the historian of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' has intimated that the spirit of Heathenism at Rome, was one of 'universal toleration'.* I can account for the mistake only on the supposition, that his hatred of the Gospel had blinded his mind to facts in history, which are of undoubted authority, and stand out in bold relief; or pre-disposed him to pass over all that he could, which was of a nature to benefit, and to exaggerate so far as safe, every thing likely to disparage Christianity. In truth, Paganism in general, whether under the form of religion, or of philosophy, was tolerant only in cases where the spirit of bigotry was not roused. At Rome, so long as the changes which took place went only to add another kindred deity to the national calendar, the evil passions of the heart being rather gratified than provoked, remained in tranquil acquiescence; but the moment a rival claimant made his appearance,—the moment that a system which emphatically claimed the attribute of truth aimed to supplant a system of popular superstition, and philosophical indifferentism, then, at once, the idle acquiescence of the people being disturbed, the national honour offended, the craft of the priesthood being jeopardised, and

* Chap. II.

the policy of the statesman embarrassed, and his tenure of office threatened, the calm was at an end; interest and prejudice conspired with animosity, armed themselves with the powers of the state, and spared no effort, whether right or wrong, to crush the rising competitor. But as it is an important circumstance, that Christianity, with all its corruptions, was not the aggressor, nor the originator of persecution, I shall not content myself with general statements, but bring forward unquestionable historical facts, bearing on the point. And my allegation is, that the most cultivated nations of ancient times, were all, more or less, guilty of persecution. Egypt, probably, was the cradle of civilisation. Different parts of the country had their different objects of worship, and the animal that was adored in this place, was slaughtered and eaten in another. Hence sprang mutual reproaches of impiety, which led to quarrels, hatred, and cruelty. The extent to which these animosities were carried, has been described, as well by the pen of history, as that of satire; and he who has read the frightful and sickening account which Juvenal has given of a religious discord in Egypt, will need no other evidence of the existence of a persecuting spirit in that land, nor think that the poet has overdrawn the picture in the following words—

> 'Between two neighbouring towns, a deadly hate,
> Sprung from a grudge of ancient date,
> Yet flames,—a hate no lenients can assuage,
> No time subdue, a rooted rancorous rage.'
>
> *Juvenal, Satire* XV. *Gifford's Translation.*

From Egypt go to Persia. The Magii were philosophers as well as religionists. With what severity did they bring their power to bear against the encroachments which Christianity, in the first ages, laboured to make on their superstitious empire. And long before Christ appeared in the world—when its monarchs brought

down their innumerable hordes, in order to sweep Greece out of social existence, they were aided in levying their vast forces by the spirit of bigotry, and impelled, by the same spirit, to direct the storm of their wrath in a special manner against the temples and the religion of the land. And in Greece itself, Greece—the foster-parent of philosophy and the school of the arts which embellish life and refine the heart; in Athens, the eye and the soul of Greece, was there a law, which, according to the authority of Josephus, expressly forbade on pain of death, the introduction of the worship of a strange divinity. Nay, Xenophon himself has given us the very words in which the virtuous Socrates was arraigned, and they are to the effect that he was worthy of death for neglecting the national gods and introducing new objects of worship.* The consequences of the accusation are generally known; he whom the oracle of Apollo—the most celebrated in Greece, had pronounced the wisest of men, and who was not only the wisest but the best of all the uninspired benefactors of the world, who spent the better part of his days in efforts of self-denying and disinterested benevolence, and became thereby an object of tender regard to men whose writings have shed light over the whole civilized world, was first shamefully ridiculed on the public stage, and afterwards put to death in prison, though he had gone to the very limits of propriety in a care not to wound the prejudices of the people, nor excite the jealous alarm of the priest, the philosopher, or the statesman. His is not a solitary case. Athens was scarcely less unjust to her instructors, than she was ungrateful to her patriots. The judicial murder of Socrates took place at Athens, in the time of its highest democratic liberty, and of its most flourishing civilisation; and during the same period, between Pericles and Alexander, we can even now trace, but too clearly, the

* Xen. Mem. cap. 1

footsteps of persecution. It required the tears, the public tears of Pericles, of the dictator of the state, of its then most distinguished conqueror, of him who had so often decided in peace and war, to save a feeble woman, Aspasia, who was suspected of novelties of opinion. But all the eloquence of Pericles could not save his master and friend, Anaxagoras; Anaxagoras was condemned to a prison, which he exchanged in his old age only for perpetual exile. What was his crime? He taught the unity of God. Even Aristotle himself, the father of Natural History, the father of Logic and of systematic Metaphysics, preserved his life with difficulty; he had only time to escape from his home by a secret way, and he took refuge in a distant land, in order, as he said, to save the Athenians another crime against intellectual freedom. And what was his end? The balance of the evidence is, that age and persecution impelled him to poison himself in his place of exile.*

I have only too many other examples—but I must hasten to Rome. And can it, in the face of history, be for a moment maintained, that the government of Rome was guiltless of persecution? Did not the fundamental laws of the State, the laws of the Twelve Tables, bear these words—'Let no one, apart from the authority of the Commonwealth, acknowledge any gods; nor in his private capacity worship any but those which have the public sanction, whether new or foreign'?† Was not the temple which Egyptian superstition had erected at Rome, more than once, demolished by an express decree of the Senate? And were not the Jewish residents at Rome objects of its persecuting wrath, before it burst forth against the followers of Christ? And surely all that history has recorded of the cruelties practised against Christians from the middle of the first century onwards till the time of Constantine, is neither fable nor exaggeration. Even Gibbon himself, strive as he may to diminish the number

* Cousin, Cours de Philosophie, vol. 1. † Cicero de Legibus.

of the martyrs, and mitigate the account of their sufferings, cannot conceal the glaring fact, that thousands had a fiery trial to endure at the hands of Roman Paganism, and is compelled to allow, that its persecution was carried on under the sanction both of law and philosophy. Let the ensuing quotation suffice: 'The religious policy of the ancient world seems to have assumed a more stern and intolerant character, to oppose the progress of Christianity. About four score years after the death of Christ, his innocent disciples were punished with death by the sentence of a Pro-Consul of the most amiable and philosophic character, and according to the laws of an emperor, distinguished by the wisdom and justice of his general administration. The apologies which were repeatedly addressed to the successors of Trajan are filled with the most pathetic complaints, that the Christians, who obeyed the dictates and solicited the liberty of conscience, were alone, among all the subjects of the Roman Empire, excluded from the common benefits of their auspicious government.' But not only were the numerous and diversified cruelties which the Christians underwent, inflicted by the magistrates and sanctioned by the laws of Rome, not only did they proceed from the priest, the philosopher, and the populace, but they were defended and justified by the historian. Even the profound and sagacious Tacitus, while recording the infamy of Nero in making his own crime of setting the city on fire, bring disaster on the harmless disciples of Jesus, declares that they deserved the sufferings which were inflicted on them without a cause; and a later writer, Hierocles, employs arguments in favor of the persecution of the Christians, which the arch-inquisitor himself might not disdain to own. A bitter persecutor himself, he thus attempts to give even philosophy a title to persecute: 'It is the duty of philosophy to apply a remedy to the errors of men, and to call them back to the true way, that is, the worship of the gods by whose

power and majesty the world is governed, nor to suffer unlearned persons to be enticed by fraud, lest their simplicity should become a prey and a booty to the artful. Therefore it is worthy of philosophy to have undertaken the office of reviving the worship of the gods, and leading men, by laying aside their pertinacious obstinacy, to avoid the tortures of their body, so that they might not be willing to bear in vain the bitter laceration of their members; nor could the piety and foresight of princes be more brightly distinguished than in defending the religion of the gods, putting down an impious and foolish superstition, and requiring all men to devote themselves to the sacred rites.'*

It would be easy to show, in detail, that even in modern times, philosophy has not been free from a persecuting spirit, and has advanced doctrines which breathe the essence of bigotry and intolerance. What was the bearing towards each other of the rival sectaries among the schoolmen of the middle ages? Differences of opinion begat hostility, hostility degenerated into rancor, rancor led to violence. Nay, it requires no profound knowledge of the writings of the French philosophers of the last century to know, that some of those who were chief among them, indulged in such a bitterness of spirit and severity of language against Christianity and its professors, that if there is such a thing as persecution in words, their advocates will find some difficulty in exonerating them from the charge. Nor can I be easily induced to think that the latitude of contempt, ridicule, and rancor with which they wrote against the religion of their country, had but a small effect in the rage which, a few years after their death, levelled all its institutions and interests with the dust, and for a time set up, in the person of an abandoned woman, the goddess of reason as the idol of the national homage.

It must be even more obvious to every impartial stu-

* Bayle.

dent of history that ambition, state policy, and political power have, in all ages, waged the bitterest and most destructive conflicts of rivalry; nor do I think it would be hard to prove that, where religious error has slain its thousands, they have immolated their myriads. Even the most disgraceful persecution of modern times, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was a political atrocity veiled under a religious guise. Indeed, the intimation of an ancient historian* in regard to the rulers of one country contains a general truth, that statesmen aim at power, and use religion and religious animosities as their instruments.

So much, then, for the allegation that Christianity introduced persecution into the world. In relation to the Christians of the fourth, and immediately subsequent ages, the fact seems to be, that in regard to persecution, while they repeated the lesson which former masters had taught them, they proved themselves but imperfect scholars in the unholy task. And it certainly is, in itself, a very extenuating circumstance that, so far from being first to display intolerance, they did but too naturally—yet most wrongfully—return a less evil for a greater. I repeat, I offer no apology for bigotry. I only wish the truth to be known, and the verdict to be according to the evidence. With this desire I must then add, that the first decree which issued from any monarch in favour of entire and universal liberty of conscience, was the work of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine; and although it must, in truth, be said that he did not himself remain faithful to his own avowed wishes, yet neither did he indulge in intolerance to the extent of preceding heathen Emperors, nor to the extent with which the enemies of Christianity have charged against him; and the most impartial of all chroniclers, as well as the most industrious,† has satisfactorily shown that long after the establishment of

* Diodorus. † Lardner.

Christianity in power, Heathenism was tolerated in no small degree, and allowed some share of the dignities and emoluments of social life. Whence, too, I would ask, but from the bosom of Christianity itself, has, in more modern days, proceeded the voice which has demanded and eventually gained—in no mean degree—the restoration of the rights of conscience. At the period of the Reformation it was not philosophy, but the religion of Jesus, which not only struck a fatal blow at the Papal tyranny, but, by the mouth of eminent Unitarian writers, threw out principles of religious liberty which, when fully realized, will secure all that its most ardent friend could wish; and the standard, the imperishable writings—the master pieces in which the rights of conscience find a vindication, and by which they have been in part, at least, effectually gained—the writings which impregnated the mind of modern Europe both with just conceptions of religious liberty, and the deep resolve to secure its attainment, came from no school of mere philosophy, from no cabinet of politicians, but from men who regarded the religion of Jesus as their own hope, and the hope of the world,—from Milton, Bishop Taylor, and from Locke. Nor do I fear to affirm, that the great battle of liberty which has been won in this country, has, from the days of the eighth Henry to the fourth George, been fought on the field of religion. The highest rights which she has, England owes to the faithful, costly, but successful vindication of their principles, which the Dissenters from her Established Church have so honourably achieved.

These remarks furnish us with the means of confirming the view I have given of the nature of persecution.

Analyse the complex idea represented by the word persecution, or intolerance. Is it the infliction of injury? Yes; but not merely so, for war does that. Is it a manifestation of selfishness? Yes; but something more, for trade is the pursuit of self-interest. Is it a fond attach-

ment to one's own ideas? Yes; but not exclusively, for such conceit attaches to persons in all ranks of life. Seek, then, for the idea in the union of these qualities. Persecution consists of an undue self-estimation, called into violent action by mistaken views of self-interest, and carried out into active injuries against dissidents, by means of the association with itself of social power. Its origin is in mental pride, its immediate parent is a false sense of wrong, of wounded self-esteem, at the prevalence of diversity of opinion; and its arms are the opprobrious tongue, the prison, and the sword. The free-thinker and the moral innovator offend my self-love, and endanger my interests: he thus kindles the strongest passions of my breast, and, according to my opportunity, I seek my revenge, and attempt to arrest the evil by compulsion. Pride, selfishness, and violence are, then, the constituent qualities of intolerance. In other words, it is the infliction of evil, as I have before observed, on account of diversity of opinion. Will it, then, be maintained that it is peculiar to religion? Did not Voltaire persecute Christians, when he loaded them with names of ridicule and opprobrium? Was Christianity its author? Christianity suffered all manner of evil before it inflicted any. What then? Are we to lay the charge on religion and philosophy alike? By no means; they aim to remedy the very evil of which they are wrongfully accused. Where, then, does the burden lie? On the lower passions of our nature. Pride and selfishness engender intolerance and persecution. These are passions which are of universal prevalence, and when they are excited by opposition and armed with power, they prompt to persecution. Look at the Christian Church. So long as it was depressed, it was tolerant; seated by the side of the Cæsars, it became intolerant. The Church of England first suffered, and then, becoming dominant, had récourse to persecution. The possession of social power

is the circumstance which has let loose the animosities of rival religionists and rival sectaries of all kinds; and the only sure guarantee we can as yet possess for the security of mental liberty, is in preventing the accumulation of unrestrained power in the hands of any associated body of men. Some opinions, undoubtedly, tend more than others to encourage persecution—but I would trust philosophy, I would trust religion; I would not trust human passions, I would not trust false views of human interests, I would not place my rights of conscience within the reach of social power. And here, I am naturally led to utter a word of warning. This is the day of Associations. Men associate for objects of all kinds, and, curious enough, they associate to form—as if at a blow, 'A New Moral World.' It will be well, if, in the midst of these associations, individual rights are not sacrificed. Association implies the concentration of power in a few hands. This is one secret of its efficiency. And the power thus accumulated may be used for harm as well as for good; to establish an oligarchy and a despotism, which, however benevolent they may appear, will be sure to invade the rights of individuals, and perhaps the dearest rights of conscience. And, except I am mistaken, I have observed the working of passions in connexion with Socialism, which show that the leaven of unrighteousness, the love of power, and the consequent intolerance of rivalry, is not idle within the 'Community.' At present, indeed, its very constitution seems to be the government of the few; and in the hands of the few, whatever power and property the sect possesses is to be found. Nor can I understand how, in the passage from the actual state of society into the land of promise, the liberty of individuals and of the body should fail to be endangered, when of necessity the working out of the change, the admission of members, and, in a word, the whole machinery, is in

the hands of a small number of persons, who, however wise or warm their benevolence, cannot be insensible to the blandishments of power. Besides, if any opinions lead to the employment of external force, in order to produce internal changes, what opinions rather than those which teach that, by the force of circumstances, you can make man think, and feel, and act as you will? The patient in the hands of a persecuting socialist could not plead conscience, for man's accountableness to God is disallowed; nor could he plead conviction or education—that is the very disorder that has to be cured. The socialist knows, if he does not know himself, that he is wrong and wretched; and if the patient is so foolish as not to wish for an improved character—nay, to resist the appliances of reason—this obstinacy only shows how inveterate is the disease, how loud the call is for an effectual cure; and might naturally impel the moral physician to resolve on making the patient sound and happy in spite of himself. And should any follower of this new philosophy feel himself called to make the attempt, he would have a ready justification against the charge of bigotry, in declaring that he was not responsible for his actions, he but did as he was impelled. And as to the infliction of evil by the employment of force, how could there be any, since the circumstances brought to bear on the patient were but the needful discipline to bend him to the yoke of Socialism, and make him happy? In fact, the socialist is the 'social father'—the rest of the world are his children, whose characters are formed for them by the great parent; and if any of his family continue refractory in his hands, he is authorised, by the relation he bears to the child, to resort to all needful severity. I have, indeed, no fear that the present Head of Socialism could ever find it in his heart to employ compulsion, but I have seen too much of the spirit of persecution in some of his satellites,

to think it would be safe that they should be invested with power; and I frankly say, that though some of their views favour the use of force, I should fear their passions more than their principles. In their case, as in every other, persecution would, in the main, have to be charged on the lower impulses of human nature.

I have proved that Christianity did not introduce persecution; I have proved that Christian authorities are not guilty to the extent alleged; I have shown that the imputation, in general, lies against human passions; and now, keeping in mind the distinction which I mentioned in my first lecture, and which I consider most important, between Christianity and the religion of Christ—that which is prevalent in the world and that which is found in the gospel histories, I proceed, lastly, to consider whether the religion of Christ affords a sanction to bigotry and intolerance. What is the real question? It is simply this,—does the religion of Christ authorize me to employ force, to make you think as I think? Now, I at once deny the possibility of any such authority. If the religion of Christ bade me persecute, the only legitimate consequence would be, the supercession of its own authority, not the devolution of authority on another. Any system stands self-condemned, which interferes with the rights of conscience. The divinity of its origin is contradicted by the fact of its authorising persecution. You cannot prove its divinity to me, by any evidence superior to my in-born right to think and speak with entire freedom.

Again; should it even appear that Jesus himself was a persecutor,—what then? How do I get to the conclusion, that I have a right to persecute? Are his circumstances and mine the same? Can I call forth the dead to attest the divinity of my mission? Have I the breadth and depth of light which illuminated his mind? Is his benevolence mine? In other words, Am I he, or one with like authority?

Once more:—Suppose that he inflicted penalties on disbelief, is that any sanction why I should force the profession of my creed on a fellow-man? What guarantee can I have that my creed is the creed of Christ? I may so consider it—but am I infallible? And if I saw eye to eye with Jesus, how does it follow that I am to do as he did in regard to matters of belief? Even if you succeed in proving that he commanded the apostles to employ compulsion, you are scarcely advanced a step over the immeasurable space which separates him from me.

The errors to which I have now alluded spring from a prolific source—from that parent error, that whatever is found in the histories of Christ is common to all men of all ages. Now, the truth is, that in them there is little that is common, and almost every thing peculiar—peculiar in its strict, full, and proper meaning, to the individuals themselves in connection with whom it first occurred. To them, and for them, was the word; to, and for us, is the spirit. But in gathering up that spirit, we must separate from it every thing of an individual, local, and transient nature; and, in an especial manner, all those functions which Jesus exercised, in virtue of his extraordinary character, peculiar circumstances, and divine commission.

But I altogether deny that the religion of Christ gives any encouragement to bigotry and intolerance. I have argued that it could not, in the nature of things, afford a sanction to persecution; and now I maintain as a fact, that it does not interfere with, but guarantees, the rights of conscience.

Among its highest duties stands the service of God; of God, I say, in contradistinction to the service of man. What is that service? In general, the surrender of the whole of our being to his will; and, specifically and essentially, the gift of the heart. Hence religion is a

concern which lies exclusively between the individual and his God. The right of human control is, in consequence, excluded. Conscience is the domain of religion—and who but God has access or power there? The essence of true religion is in its spirituality. It is a power within—not an external show, nor an external reality. It consists in certain states of the mind, which force can neither form nor crush. Religion, then, lies beyond the province of human power. Its seat is placed within the breast by him who is its author; and who, by the very fact, has guaranteed its safety from all the appliances of compulsion; and so has it been found that laws and penalties are utterly powerless to make men religious;—professors, hypocrites, martyrs, they may create, but not one truly religious emotion can they produce. Spontaneousness is the essential attribute of religion. It is a natural sentiment, an instinct; and you may as well try to make a mother love her child by force, as think to excite or change a religious feeling by persecution.

Besides, the religion of Jesus, in its application to us, is faith. But faith in what? Faith not in articles and creeds and catechisms. Jesus himself proposed none, has left none. But faith in himself; faith, that is, in the qualities which formed his character—faith in devotedness to the will of God and the service of man—faith in the efficacy of truth and the power of love; in other words, it is trust towards our Heavenly Father, and benevolence towards our brethren of mankind. The faith of the gospel histories is of a moral nature, consisting in the practical acknowledgement of the worth and efficacy of the several human emotions which distinguished, adorned, and blessed the life of Jesus. Its faith, therefore, is confidence in God, and love to man; it is fidelity to our own nature, our own opportunities, our own convictions. And, if any thing can be—

such a faith is far beyond the reach of human control, and all the appliances of force. And thus, God the author of the religion of Jesus, has guaranteed its security. Can a prison make me devout? Will the rack create the love of human kind? If I am insensible to the charities and sympathies which filled the breast and glowed in the life of Christ, is it in your power to open my heart to them by menace, or fire, or sword? What have these material instruments to do with feelings which are essentially and purely moral in their origin, their developement, and their expression?

You allege that Jesus threatened damnation on those who did not believe? And if he did, what right have I to do the same? But in truth, Jesus did not threaten, he simply declared a fact. His words are not minatory, but declaratory. And what do they declare? Not that even the men of his own day—much less others differently circumstanced, would be consigned to the regions of woe for an intellectual error, but that condemnation would ensue, as a natural consequence, on that moral condition which was the reverse of his own. He himself has given the commentary—and 'this is the condemnation that though light has come into the world, men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' (John iii, 19.) And if men, through an evil heart of unbelief, prefer the slavery of sense to the adoption of the sons of God, prefer revenge to forgiveness, and hatred to love, what can ensue but misery?—what can their state be, but one of condemnation—self-condemnation, for their own hearts condemn them; and condemnation on the part of every mind, whether in the visible or invisible world, which loveth righteousness and hateth iniquity, and is therefore pledged to the furtherance of the one and the extirpation of the other? In other words—and words which, perhaps, will convey the truth more exactly and more intelligibly, at least to the

unbeliever, iniquity of heart and life is disapproved of God and man. Whence you may, at once, and without a word of commentary on my part, infer how grossly erroneous is the view which Mr. Owen himself has given of the nature of the religion of Christ, whose 'fundamental doctrines' he declares to be these,—'Believe in my doctrines, as expounded by my priests, from my sacred books;—second, feel as these doctrines, thus expounded, direct you to feel;—and third, support my ministers for thus instructing you.'*

The great principles, then, of the religion of Christ are absolutely incompatible with persecution.

For a moment, advert to the particular moral qualities which it condemns, and those which it encourages. What are they which it condemns? Pride, selfishness, the love of dominion. Now, these, as we have seen, are the very qualities which engender persecution. What are they which it encourages? Meekness, forbearance, and universal love. And are not these the parents of tolerance, and of that charity, or Christian love, so beautifully and eloquently described by Paul, among whose attributes is found every thing needful to convert mankind into a family of brothers.

It is hardly necessary to give actual instances; yet as socialists, perhaps, no more than did one of their predecessors,† keep a Bible, it may not be useless to cite one or two. Peter was ready to employ violence in defence of his master; but the command was (Matt. xxvi. 52.) 'Put up thy sword again into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.' After having given that most striking lesson of meekness by washing his disciples' feet, Jesus expressly forbids (Matt. xx. 25.) his disciples to imitate the Gentiles by exercising dominion and authority; 'but whosoever

* Book of the New Moral World, p. 94. London, Wilson. † Paine.

will be great amongst you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief amongst you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.' Again:—'Be ye not called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' (Matt. xxvii. 8.) It cannot be imagined that the idea of persecution did not present itself to the mind of Jesus. It did; and what was his language? 'Blessed are they which *are* persecuted for righteousness' sake; when they persecute you in one city, flee into another.' But against persecutors themselves our Lord uttered the severest condemnation. (Matt. xxiii. 29—39.) And on whom did his blessing descend? 'Blessed are the meek.' 'Blessed are the merciful.' 'Blessed are the peace-makers.' (Matt. v.) What was his express command? The love of God is the first commandment; the second, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matt. xxii. 35.) 'This is my commandment, that ye love one another, *as* I have loved you.' '*By this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' (John xv. 12. xiii. 35.) It hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemies; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and *pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.*' (Matt. vi. 43.)

Jesus, then, does more than disallow persecution; he disallows its causes, he cuts off its springs, he lays the axe to the root of the tree, making the heart gentle and kind, that the life may be harmless and beneficent.

Then look at his character. Is it that of a bigot, or of a benefactor—of a persecutor, or a sufferer?—what is the feature which shines forth in the general tenor of his life and death? Is it not benevolence, universal good-will? What was his mission? To seek and save that which was lost. What was the burden of his

teachings? The Gospel—that is, good news, good news, glad tidings to all people. What was his destiny? To suffer and die. What was his reward? To rise again that he might accomplish the travail of his soul, and bring peace on earth, good-will among men. What was the petition in his dying prayer? An entreaty for the forgiveness of his murderers. And what were his last words? 'It is finished!' It is finished? and yet no creed set forth, no priesthood organized, no church endowed with wealth and power—no recompense taken or enjoined for the injuries he or his had suffered! You remember the rebuke he gave to the persecuting spirit of his disciples. Yes; intolerance stood in the presence of Jesus, recommended by the wish of his intimate associates; and it was mildly, but firmly, discountenanced. 'Call down fire from heaven on these Samaritans who refuse you food, and are thus as inhospitable as they are heretical.' 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' Thus taught, thus lived, and thus died, the author and finisher of our faith. Who, then, can say that his religion sanctions persecution? Who can deny that it inculcates and cherishes the freest liberty of mind, and the kindliest and most catholic affections of the heart? No! the man that has the spirit of Christ can be no other than kind, tender-hearted, forgiving—gentle alike to the errors, frailties, and transgressions of his brethren. He knows too well his own failings, to be severe on the failings of others. He cherishes too carefully his own rights, to entertain any other feeling than a wish to secure and enlarge the liberties of each and all of the human family—to aid them in their search after truth, and build them up in every pure, holy, and kindly feeling. And so, for myself, my friends, I trust that I am so deeply aware of the difficulties which accompany the discovery of moral and religious truth, and

the yet greater difficulties which wait upon its open profession—that I am so impressed with the value of mental honesty, and so convinced of its rarity—that for worlds, I would not lay the burden of a little finger on any man's conscience, but be prompt to express the admiration which I feel for the honest avowal and consistent maintenance of any convictions whatever. In my mind, there is but one unpardonable sin—unpardonable, inasmuch as it eats like a canker into the heart, destroying virtue and destroying happiness;—I mean, to profess what you do not believe, and to make your hypocrisy a source of worldly gain. I am not, indeed, insensible to the injurious tendencies of error. I pity the sufferers, but I dare not condemn them; and because I pity, I love them; and as I love their persons, so would I rejoice to remove their false opinions, and lead them into the way of truth.

LECTURE IV.

An Unitarian minister was not long since told by one, whose state of mind, in some respects, was not unsuited to the adoption of Unitarian opinions, that he was prevented from doing so mainly by the consideration, that while Unitarian ministers claimed no higher authority for their interpretations of Scripture than their own reason, Orthodox ministers claimed the authority of inspiration, and the immediate sanction of the Holy Spirit. The answer of the minister in question was—'Then the greater the pretension, the easier your faith.' The implied absurdity was not denied. And thousands are of the same way of thinking. Thousands? The bulk of men, even in this enlightened country and in this enlightened age, are taken and made captive the more readily, the more ample and showy the pretensions are. Indeed, for success you must not be scanty in your claims. If your professions are modest, you are sure to fail. It is only those who can make grandeur sit easily upon them that can impose on the multitude. But such persons may obtain converts to almost any absurdity. Proclaim it all over the land that you have discovered a medicine which will heal, not some, but all diseases, and, provided you take sufficient time and trouble, you are sure to bring thousands to your own opinion, and will be rewarded more richly than the real benefactors of mankind. Declare that you only know the right path to heaven, and that all who do not follow your guidance will infallibly be lost; believe this yourself, and insist on your conviction, you will not fail to become the founder of a sect, and, by the adoption of

a part of his means, may rival in his success even the apostle of Methodism.

I do not assert that there was any intention on the part of Mr. Owen to avail himself of that love of the wonderful to which I have just alluded; but I know of no system in which its influence is in fact so much appealed to, nor any in which it produces more decided effects. Owenism would almost appear to have been constructed on the principle of producing the greatest results from the least possible causes. What is its aim? The physical perfection of the species. So far as *its* conception of happiness extends, it professes to have in store for its followers the highest, purest, and most stable happiness that man, either in his individual or social capacity, can possibly enjoy;—abundance, ease, content; a wife, with the power of exchanging her whenever it may be pleasant; children, without any care for their sustenance or education; labor, only so far as may be healthful and satisfactory—and even this small portion is not to be borne after the age of twenty-five years.* In a word, Socialism proposes to realise its own definition of man, and make him 'the chief of animals.'† No more poverty, no more ignorance, no more suffering, no more inequality:—in the words of one o its expounders, 'community' is to be 'a paradise on earth.'‡ Nor is there to be a spot where this paradise is not to extend. The vision of the Catholic Church, in the pursuit of which she evil-entreated and shed the blood of many of the best and wisest of men,—this vision is to be turned into a reality, all men are to be brought to think alike, and Socialism will be the one universal faith. The wise of this world are to own themselves fools; the ministers of religion will resign

* Owen's Lectures in Manchester, pp. 77, 78, 79.
† Catechism of the New Moral World, p. 2.
‡ Horton.

their functions; the nobility will divest themselves of their distinctions; kings and queens, of their own accord, will lay aside their sceptre and descend from their throne;—nay, greater wonders yet—family unions will dissolve of themselves; family ties will spontaneously sunder; the father's love towards his daughter will expand into universal benevolence; and, ere very long, the whole of human society will wonder to see itself breaking up all old and time-honored institutions, ideas, and customs, and quietly, but earnestly, proceeding into that parallelogram condition of happiness, called 'Community.' Such is the pretension. But that is a poor empiricism whose means are not as small as its ends are grand. What are the means for this social revolution? Almost exclusively a system of negations. Have the apostles of Socialism discovered some hidden power of the human breast? or some latent productiveness in the elements of material nature? The greatest moral reformers of ancient or modern times have looked in the main to the boundless energies of the human soul; but these are denied; man has no power but the sponge-like capacity of receiving a character made for him. Is the change to be wrought by reviving and invigorating conscience? Its existence also is denied. Are the great sanctions of eternity to be brought home to the heart in new forms and holier and more quickening power? Eternity itself is denied. Perhaps the family affections you intend to call forth into new energy, and invest them with a refinement as disinterested as it is lovely? Their existence you acknowledge, but their legitimacy you deny. Where, then, is your source of power? In the infinite Father? Do you propose to stir and regenerate the breast with that venerable and endearing name? Alas! you disown even the Supreme *Intelligence* of the Universe. All the ordinary forms of power you put away. Your teaching is, 'Disbelieve in man's responsibility,' 'disbelieve in man's internal

power,' 'disbelieve in the sanctity of wedded love,' 'disbelieve in the lawfulness of family affection,'* 'disbelieve in Christ, in religion, in eternity, in a creating MIND;' and you shall be excellent and happy, provided you believe in something termed Socialism, which relieves you from all effort by declaring the omnipotence of circumstances, at the very time that it is laboring to show their impotency by turning the world upside down.

Easy of belief as men are found to be, I cannot for myself imagine that Socialism could ever have assumed its actual prominence, but for the peculiar constitution of society in the present day. The greatest inequalities are confronted by the greatest discontent. The affluent and the needy are separated by a great gulf—the few live in splendour, the bulk with a bare sufficiency, and many in squalidness and misery;—learning, for the most part, seeks its own; the accredited dispensers of religion, for the most part, seek their own; and few, indeed, the welfare of the poor; and, therefore, the people now, at last, roused to see their condition and know their rights—the people, many of them at least, feel an intense and jealous dissatisfaction, which inclines them to any fair shows which promise, however delusively, an improvement of their lot. And because I think them more to be pitied than blamed, I am desirous to expose groundless pretensions, and to conciliate towards an effort which must of necessity touch on things with which the Christian is familiar, and of which he needs no fresh evidence or illustration, that forbearance and favor which my Christian hearers will, I have no doubt, feel ought to be extended to those who think it their duty to adapt a part of their ministrations to the special wants of the locality and circumstances in the midst of which they are placed.

You have seen what Socialism proposes to effect; you

* Owen's Marriage System, p. 37.

have heard something of its instrumentality. Such is this new light of the whole world. If the light in it is darkness, how entire must that darkness be. It is no wonder, therefore, that amidst other fond opinions, it should have gone so far as to affirm that 'the cause of the universe is unknown;' and when you have considered the complexion which this self-styled philosophy wears, perhaps, my Christian friends, you will think with me that the Atheistical tendencies of this system are not likely to prove very formidable.

Let me, however, justify my intimation, that Owenism has Atheistical tendencies; and I feel this to be the more needful, not so much because the word Atheism is a word of reproach in the world, as because the imputation of Atheism to a person is very like a reflection on his understanding, if not a charge against his heart. In the case, however, of the originator of Socialism, I look for its origin in the disorder of a mind not distinguished by power, whose benevolent feelings the existing corruptions of society have made not only morbid, but averse to all established forms of truth.

But is Owenism a form of Atheism? In proceeding to what I trust will be an equitable judgment, I ask what is Atheism? Atheism is accurately described in the language of the New Testament, as 'being without God in the world.' The man, then, is an Atheist, who acknowledges no God. It does not require to make a man an Atheist, that he should positively deny the existence of a God—it is enough, if he has no God. And what is intended by the word God? The word God represents an idea, and that idea is the conception and acknowledgment of *an infinite* INTELLIGENCE, as the sole Creator of the Universe. So that an Atheist is one who denies, or disowns, or does not acknowledge, a creating Mind, a first great intelligent Cause of all that is. And here let it be observed, that so far as the fact is

concerned, there is little difference between the man who denies, and the man who does not own, a creating Mind. Their condition is essentially the same, inasmuch as they are both without God, and both consequently Atheists. When you say that you have enquired, and found no evidence to shew you there is a supreme creative Intelligence, you differ very little from another person, who, being of a bolder turn of mind, declares that he too has enquired, and is sure there is not a supreme creative Intelligence. Essentially, these are but different forms of the same statement. Now what, then, are Mr. Owen's declarations? 'The cause of the universe is 'unknown,'* 'whence the power which designs, or what its attributes, no man has yet ascertained.'† The doctrine then is that there is a cause, but that cause is unknown to us. This I consider a form of Atheism. An unknown cause is, to the person to whom it is unknown, no cause at all. What do we mean by a cause? A cause is that which we recognize as the producer of certain effects. And making this recognition, we acknowledge its adequacy to give birth to the effects in question. In other words, we know its qualities, and consider them as the sufficient forerunners of the facts for which we have to account. So that to assert, in any case, the existence of a cause, is to assert the existence of certain qualities, and also to assert the exertion of those qualities in bringing about the given result. When, therefore, you declare one thing to be the cause of another, you declare that it possesses qualities competent to produce the effect in question. And to affirm that something is the cause of the universe, and then to declare that of that something you know nothing, is to take from the word cause all meaning, to trifle with language, or to employ a contradiction in terms. A cause, so far

* Book of the New Moral World, p. 5. † Ibid. p. 97.

as it is acknowledged to be the cause of any effect, must be known. There may be mysteries connected with it into which you cannot penetrate, but as of these you know, so also you assert, nothing. What you declare is, that a certain power is adequate to the production of a certain effect; and if you proceed to add that this acknowledged cause is unknown, you shew that you do not understand the terms you employ, and are darkening counsel with words without knowledge. And Socialism must make its election between the word cause and the word 'unknown'; if it retains the first, and acknowledges a cause, then consistency exacts the rejection of the term unknown; if it will keep the word unknown, it can by no possibility have a right to the word cause. An unknown cause is as incompatible a combination of ideas, as white blackness, finite infinity, the hidden discovered, the bright obscure. Whatever is a cause to me, must be known as that cause, and as possessed of the attributes requisite in the case. And as Owenism knows nothing of the cause of the universe, it can recognize a cause only in name; it uses a word, but professes to have no ideas to attach to it, and is consequently without God; in other words, a form of Atheism.

This conclusion cannot be subverted but by evading the question,—and the attempt has been made. It has been replied—'If the circumstance of a cause being unknown be a proof of its own existence, we must believe that effects can be produced without causes.'* What then? Does my reasoning go to show that Socialism, by denying the attributes of the Deity, blots the Deity himself out of the universe? A cause being unknown is no proof of its non-existence. Galvanism existed ages before it was known. But its existence was then only known when its qualities were known; and now it can

* Haslam's Reply.

be recognised as the cause of given effects only by those to whom its qualities are not unknown, but known. My position is, that an unknown cause is no cause at all *to those to whom it is unknown*. And the very words employed establish the point. Take a case. It was lately stated in the newspapers, that the hands of a clock denoting true time were exhibited in a shop window in London, unaccompanied by any machinery. An ignorant rustic looks at the wonder, concludes it must have a cause, but knows not what that cause is. The philosopher investigates the case, and assigns magnetism as the cause. He has discovered something equal to the production of the effects. But, to the rustic, magnetism is not the cause of the movement of the hands. He knows nothing of its existence, its qualities, or their application in the case; and therefore, failing to recognise it as the cause, he is without the real cause, and has nothing more than a vague feeling that something or other must occasion the effects. To him the cause is unknown; and to him, in consequence, whatever it may be in fact and to a wiser man, magnetism is no cause at all. And of what service to him is the blind admission that the movement of the hands must have had a cause? Does it afford him one glimpse of light on the subject? Can it explain the phenomena? Will it enable him to construct a similar machine? And so with him who says the universe has had a cause, and with the same breath affirms that of that cause he knows nothing;—what knowledge or impulse can he draw from his admission? It is only so far as we know the qualities of causes, whether physical or moral, that we can turn them to our own benefit. A watch or a steam engine, in the hands of a barbarian, would either prove useless, or be dashed to pieces.

My friends, there is no mystery in the word cause; either it means nothing, or it means that which is capable of producing the given effect. You therefore ac-

knowledge either an unknown nothing, or an unknown power capable of producing the universe. Now, to declare that a power is at once unknown and capable of producing a certain effect, is to assert a palpable contradiction. Unknown capacities doubtless may exist; but powers have no existence to those to whom they are unknown. America existed before Columbus discovered it; but to all the ancient world it was unknown, and as such had no existence. The blood circulated through the frame as much of the ignorant Roman as of the enlightened Harvey. To the first the existence of its circulation was not, with the other it was, the proximate cause of life. In fact, the idea of causation is one which rises in and belongs exclusively to the mind; and he who acknowledges no connexion between certain preceding qualities and certain consequent effects, admits, in any given case, no cause whatever, has not, indeed, formed the idea of cause, has not brought his mind into that condition in which the acknowledgment of a cause consists. In other words, acknowledgment is indispensable. You must acknowledge or admit certain qualities as the immediate precursors of certain effects, or you allow no cause. But acknowledgment and ignorance are incompatible states of mind; acknowledged qualities, unknown qualities, are discordant and opposite statements: that which is unknown to a mind it cannot acknowledge. Socialism, then, cannot acknowledge the cause of the universe, since of that cause it professes to know nothing. At the very utmost, it can only erect another altar to 'the unknown God.'

We shall find our assertion, that Socialism is a form of Atheism, confirmed, if we look a little farther into the language it employs respecting this unknown cause. Avowed Atheism itself is not so insane as to deny a cause of the universe. Its office has generally been to confound the Deity in some way with his works. Ac-

cordingly, Socialism tells us that 'it is of no importance whether men call the cause of the universe matter or spirit, because such names alter nothing, explain nothing.'* Matter, then, may be assigned as the cause of the universe. In other words, the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the seas, may have produced themselves. What is this but rank Atheism? Then notice the reason—'such names alter nothing, explain nothing;'—we may therefore say, matter contrives, matter fears, matter hopes. There is, consequently, no distinction between the steam engine and him who brought it to perfection; essentially they are the same, made up of the same essential qualities, in whatever accidental shapes they may appear; and as, according to this wise philosophy, the shapes are accidental, we must not be surprised if that which is essential to both should some day exert its power, and man pass into a steam engine, and a steam engine into a man.

In the passage on which I am now animadverting, we have the whole question which is at issue between the Theist and the Atheist; and it is simply this, whether the cause of the universe is matter or mind; in other words, that which thinks, or that which is incapable of thought. Is there an *Intelligence* that designed and executed the wonderful mechanism which we see on every side—or did that mechanism produce itself? Matter or mind must be the cause of the universe. Now we can conceive of mind being the cause of matter, but not matter the cause of mind. The greater may produce the less, not the less the greater. That which has not a certain quality, cannot impart that quality. The brute earth does not think, and could not therefore give birth to thinking men. In society around us, it is the human mind which brings forth all the creations we be-

* No. 82, New Moral World.

hold; and we are thus led, by the force of circumstances, to ascribe similar creations in the universe to a similar result.

Or let the argument be put in this manner;—either the cause of the universe could think, or it could not; if not, it was incapable of producing thought, and could never have given birth to the order, adaptations, and beauty, which are lavished in the universe; if it could think, then is it intelligent, then is it competent to the known effects, then is there a God, then is Atheism confuted; and, instead of being of no importance, it is of every possible importance, that men should call and consider the cause of the universe, not matter, but spirit or mind—should assert, that whatever else it is, it is capable of thought, and therefore of design, and therefore also of wisdom and goodness.

Again; Mr. Owen himself affirms that this unknown cause is now 'nature,' and now 'the laws of nature;' and, as if to confound the mind by incongruous ideas, adds, that 'truth is nature, and nature God.'* It is with equal inconsistency, that the person who in one part of his instructions distinctly asserts that we know nothing of the Divine attributes, should in another affirm, not only that the unknown cause has attributes, but 'attributes to govern the universe as it is governed,' and that these attributes are 'infinite, eternal, uncaused, omnipresent.'† Now what a confusion of ideas have we here. Let us put the words of this light of 'the new moral world' together;—'the *unknown* cause of the universe is nature, is truth, is the laws of nature; this *unknown* cause, whose attributes are undiscovered, is uncaused, infinite, eternal, omnipresent.' Thus inconsistent is error generally found to be;—an UNKNOWN *known!* an

* Book of New Moral World, p. 91.—No. 82, New Moral World.
† No. 82, New Moral World.

infinite, eternal, omnipresent cause, WITHOUT ATTRIBUTES! 'Truth is God, and God is nature;' in other words, truth—a mere relation of ideas in the human mind—is Deity; and God, the cause of all, is nature, or that which is produced;—the very term nature is incompatible with the idea of causation, for nature properly signifies that which continually comes into being.* And so, what are 'the laws of nature' but the manner of that ceaseless birth? To identify the cause of the universe with the modes of his action—to attempt to exclude an intelligence from the universe by talking of laws—a mere abstract term, a word which, apart from intelligence, can produce nothing, nay, which, for its very existence, implies and pre-supposes a lawgiver,—to resort to such inconsistencies, and to pick up these stale crumbs on which Atheism has, in one form or another, been already starved, serves only to show to what shifts men are driven when they embark on the ocean of godless speculation, and how deeply sunk in infidel philosophy this Socialism is.

And, indeed, whatever Socialism may be in theory, in practice what else but Atheism can it prove, since it not only disallows all worship,† all private or social acknowledgment of the Deity, but ascribes innumerable ills to the prevalence of such homage: and in their attacks on religion, Socialists never seem more at their ease, than when turning into ridicule the ideas and observances which the bulk of their fellow-countrymen regard with the profoundest reverence, and the most sacred attachment. For myself, I consider Socialism worse than any form of mere speculative Atheism that ever appeared, for, week by week, it gives its unholy lessons to the poor, the ignorant, and the young, teaching them, by precept and example, to laugh at

* *Nascor, nasci, natus sum.* † No 82, New Moral World.

God, Christ, and Eternity. True, there may be Theists in the ranks of Owenism; there may even be—though I can hardly think it possible—a few professed Christians;—but those who know what its actual workings are, know that in general its influence is one of a scornful, withering infidelity. As such it should be known. As such I proclaim it. Its adherents—if they be true to their principles—will thank me for so doing; and I devoutly hope that others who may be 'lingering on the brink,' will take warning in time, and have reason to thank me too. I say take warning; I deal not in alarm, but I retract not the word, for every one who would have his mind influenced by the better principles of his nature, ought to take warning, and lay the warning to heart, when he is in danger of being drawn into an atmosphere where his devotional feelings must be blighted, and where, ere he can have learned to reason, he will be trained to sneer.

Nothing but an attendance in the vortex of their unhallowed discussions themselves—where Socialists speak without restraint, and the spirit of the system comes out freely,—can give a full idea of the blighting and scornful infidelity which Socialism aims to spread abroad. Yet enough—alas! too much, may be learnt from their published writings. One* of their authors affirms, that '*throughout* the Old Testament the Deity is represented as a furious, angry, wrathful, jealous and malignant God,' and declares a description of operations of the Deity given in the Psalms to be 'absurd, ridiculous, yea, in sober earnestness, monstrous.'—The same lecturer† indulges in a parody of prayer, in which such revolting familiarity is used with the Deity, and such vile sentiments ascribed to the supposed Christian

* Lunn, p. 18. † Lunn, p. 14.

worshippers, that I cannot bring myself to the low office of transcribing his words. Another authority* asserts that the Bible sets forth God as 'a vain, foolish, and cruel old man,' and in animadverting on many passages of Scripture, uses language even worse than what I am about to transcribe. 'On the words—'whose top (the tower of Babel) may reach to heaven,' he remarks, 'What mighty penetration! Why, the wretched simpletons, did they think heaven was just above their heads, and that they could creep into it in this manner?' And on the words, 'The Lord came down to see the city,'—he says, 'Did he? He was up in the garret, I suppose, and he came down stairs to see what his children were all about. Are you not ashamed of such balderdash?' Mr. Owen himself affirms, that 'the intellects of man have been deranged through so many ages by these religious mysteries, they now gravely propound as divine truths,' which 'divine truths' mean nothing more than assertions which will not bear the examination of reason, or the test of common sense;' and among these—'this wild combination of absurdities,' as he terms them in another place, he ranks, 'First, that there is a being who made and who governs the universe; that this being is infinite in knowledge, in power, and in goodness.'† So also he declares that the religions founded under the name of 'Jehovah, God, or Christ, amount only to three absurdities, three gross impositions on the ignorance or inexperience of mankind;' again—'that man has *created* a personal Deity, author of all good, and a personal devil, author of all evil, invented all the forms of worship of the one, and, in many instances, of the latter also.' 'All the mythology of the ancients, and all the religions of the moderns, are mere fanciful

* Haslam, Letters to the Clergy.

† Owen's Lectures in Manchester.

notions of men, whose imaginations have been cultivated to accord with existing prejudices, and whose judgments have been systematically destroyed from their birth.'*

I could cite other, and certainly not less offensive passages, and I now ask if I have overcharged the picture—if Socialism is not, in fact and in spirit, a low and degrading infidelity? I ask, also, those of my audience who bear the parental relation, whether they would not be horror-stricken at the idea of their own children coming into contact with such demoralising influences? And if you are thus tender for your own offspring, surely you cannot be without solicitude for the young of other families—for young men and women who have few, in some cases scarcely any, of the safeguards of religious feeling and religious conviction, which a sound education affords. And who that has any personal experience of the support to virtue—the sources of happiness, of improvement and refinement that the religion of Jesus brings, would not gladly turn from this Cimmerian darkness, to enquire for truth of 'Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God?'

Now in relation to the cause of the universe, Jesus presents to us the being whom he designated 'his Father and our Father, his God and our God,' as the primary cause, the sole support, and the beneficent guardian of all things. In other words, there is a creating God, and 'God is spirit,' or pure Intelligence. Mind, therefore, is the author of the universe. This is the fundamental fact of the religion of Jesus. It affirms that the universe is not the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms, not evolved out of elements inherent in itself, but truly the production of Intelligence.

I shall offer one or two confirmations of this great

* Book of the New Moral World, p. 94.

fundamental truth. I will first take Socialism on its own ground. The cause of the universe is known or unknown. Say it is unknown;—you go at once, as I have proved, into palpable Atheism. But you reply—'We admit a cause, though an unknown cause.' You admit a cause—What has led you to that admission?—what is your evidence? The fact of the existence of the world and its inhabitants? But why? Is it because every effect must have a cause? Then it is no less true that every effect must have an adequate cause; and by consequence, that which made the world must be equal to the work he made. If so, the maker is known by his works. In the admission of an adequate cause you have admitted an intelligent Deity, for the effects you have to account for require for their production no less the operation of intelligence than they require a cause at all. In ascending from any effects to their admitted cause, you, by the very act, affirm that the cause is equal to the effects produced; in other words, you know something of the cause to which you ascend, otherwise you refer the effects to nothing, and use words without meaning.

Take the other branch of the alternative;—say the cause is known, that some of its qualities are known. Whence this knowledge? From the effects produced? Then what are the qualities, the attributes to which the effects point? This the effects themselves will enable us to answer. What, then, is their character? I have no need to descend to any minuteness. What impress do they obviously bear? Is it not of intelligence? The making of a watch you refer to man; for the rounding of a pebble, the action of flowing water is accounted sufficient. The influence of matter is assigned as the cause of the one; for the other, you cannot rest satisfied till you have referred it to the action of mind. If you look at the mere polish of its cover, the idea of in-

telligence is not forced on your thoughts; but the moment you mark its structure, and the concurrence of its parts to one and a useful result, you think of the skill of the master-mind which designed and constructed the mechanism. What hinders a similar conclusion in regard to the maker of the mind which made the watch? And having ascended from the mechanism of the watch to its maker, and ascribed to him that degree of intelligence which the structure of the several parts implies, can you go from the maker of the watch to its maker, and fail to refer any qualities to Him? In both cases, you must admit, at least, the operation of mind; and I see not why you should not in the case of the maker of the man, as well as the maker of the watch, admit—I see not how you can avoid admitting—so much mind, mind of such quality and power, as the effects in each case are found to indicate. And, indeed, whatever mystery an atheistical philosophy may gather up out of its own mists to throw around the existence of Deity, common sense, which, by the mere force of the association of ideas, by the fundamental principles of human reasoning, cannot avoid referring all effects to adequate causes —common sense will lead men infallibly to see evidences of an intelligent Deity in the works of nature, as much as traces of the operation of mind in works of human skill. It is in vain to tell me you never saw a world made. If you had, you would not need the evidence of analogy. Nor have you, in all probability, nor one human being in a million, ever seen a watch made. General principles are your guide in both cases; and they are as trust-worthy in one instance as they are in the other. It is a necessity of your nature—a necessity, bred, if not born, with you—to refer all that you see to some adequate cause, the universe as much as the pin. And in the word 'adequate' is, in each case, an impli-

cation of qualities,—of qualities equal to the effect. In regard, therefore, to the universe, you know something of its author; you know not only that he possesses intelligence, but intelligence of such a nature and extent as would be competent to create and sustain this complicated, boundless, and harmonious whole. On both branches of the alternative, therefore, we are brought to the admission of an intelligent cause.

Again;—Socialism, as every system must which aspires to the character of a philosophy—Socialism is incessantly occupied in forming and pronouncing judgments respecting human character; in other words, respecting mind as variously possessed by man. Its great conclusion, that a 'new moral world' is imperatively demanded, and the instrumentality which it proposes to employ, are grounded on the supposition that you have accurate knowledge of the condition and workings of the human mind. This knowledge is either trust-worthy, or it is not. If undeserving confidence, Socialism is but a dream. If it is worthy of trust, then tell me how you have acquired it? Is it not by watching the manifestations of mind?—in other words, by taking note of effects, of outward appearances, and proceeding from them to internal qualities? You see a man slay a brother-man; and you ascribe to him at once, wrath, if not malice, and go back to the melancholy circumstances under which he was trained. You read a well-composed treatise; your mind is enlightened, your heart is softened and lifted up; and just as are the qualities which the writing exhibits, are the qualities also which you ascribe to its author. You not only know that the book must have had a cause, but a cause of a certain kind,—you refer it to a mind gifted with high and noble powers. And yet you affirm that 'the facts are not known which declare what attributes are possessed by the power'

which endowed that mind with its capacities. If so, then, to be consistent, you must renounce your belief in any mental or moral qualities whatever. They are all the result of inference; and to say the least, the inference is as good and cogent in respect of the author of the universe, as in respect of the author of the book.

It has been replied, that you see the one but do not see the other. In the case of the author, what do you see? Not the producing mind, but the outside covering of a being endowed with speech and motion. In general, indeed, you see not so much. It is the work, and not the author you see; and few are they who have either made a book, or seen a book made. And if even you, an individual, have seen the process, how do you know that all books are the work of man? Will you leap from one instance to a universal conclusion? What authority have you for this, but in that general principle which most men receive without distinct evidence, that like effects spring from like causes? I admit the principle; but then, how, after acting on it in regard to some things, can you set it aside in regard to others; and if it enables you to know a human author by his works, how can you consistently refuse to infer the attributes of the power which produced the universe, from the qualities which the universe displays? But I recur to the fact;—you see in a fellow-man, not his mind, but its manifestations; and from those manifestations you unhesitatingly and securely infer the qualities of his mind. Are there not manifestations of mind in the outward universe? As then are they, so at least must be its author. In fact, the argument for the existence of the Divine mind is the same in kind (but immeasurably stronger in degree) as that by which we human beings are led to acknowledge the existence of mind in each other. And I cannot conceive what better evidence any

man can need of the existence and attributes of Deity, than he possesses of the existence and qualities of the mind of his friend, his partner, or his child.

Nor is the argument invalidated by the circumstance, that in the case of man there is a certain form, a certain visible organisation. This form does not enter into the argument at all; it is a mere accident in the case. In the author of the book, no organisation is seen by the bulk of men. If one is inferred, that is a simple act of the reason; and what reason infers in one case, it may, on evidence, infer or not infer in the other. That the form in the case of man is a mere accident, may be learnt from looking at other instances where qualities are learned from seen effects. The needle points to the pole,—hence you infer qualities which constitute what men have agreed to designate magnetism. Has magnetism any outward form? The atmosphere is troubled with tempest, and lightning, and thunder; and the application of your knuckle to a piece of glass in a certain state, draws forth sparks, and communicates a shock to your whole frame. You call the cause of both these effects, electricity. Does electricity present itself in any organised form? Yet the inferences from these effects you not only receive without hesitation, but, to show the certainty and trust-worthiness of your conclusions, you dignify them with the name of science; and having systematised the conceptions of your own mind, proceed to construct heaven and earth thereout, and propound your 'electrical theory of the universe.' Yes, it is out of the mere inferences and ideas of your own minds that you make a world, and set aside the world's maker; and yet you blame us, in no polite nor measured terms, for thinking our conclusions as well-founded and far more competent than yours. One of two things, therefore, must you do; either renounce the disclosures

of science, or admit that qualities may be learnt from facts without those facts being presented in any outward form or bodily organisation. For the needle is not magnetism, but its vehicle—a vehicle which receives, imparts, and loses the magnetic power. The power itself, the qualities in question, are independent of their accidental locality. And so the manifestations of intelligence in the organisations of the universe are not necessarily inherent in them. From them, therefore, we rise to those attributes which made them what they are, and are as sure as evidence can make us that the attributes themselves must be equal to the effects they have produced.

The Atheist will not be benefitted if he tries, by bewildering our minds in a cloud of metaphysics, to put a God out of the universe, by asking, as he has asked—'If every effect must have a cause, who then was the cause of the God whom you recognise?' Let him go back with us to the remotest link in the chain of causation, he will still find something, some power to account for. What is his explanation? He has none to give which will not involve either the admission of a great first Cause, which is Theism—the concession of all we contend for; or an *effect* without a cause, which is an absurdity; or an eternal succession of effects, which is a contradiction in terms. So far as knowledge leads them, Theists go; and guided by knowledge and experience, rest at last in a primary Intelligence—having thus reached a cause adequate to the given effects, a cause which both common sense and philosophy combine to justify. The Atheist, on the contrary, compelled by the principles of his nature to trace back effects to causes to a certain length, at last stops short at an *effect without a cause;* and by this, vitiates every step in his previous reasoning. Thus he allows what he

terms his ignorance in one particular, to overturn all his most certain knowledge. Suppose, then, that he and I are arrived at the last chain in causation which we can trace, is his hypothesis, that there is no first cause at all, less exceptionable or more probable than mine, who admit an original of the lengthened chain of effects, though into the mode of its existence I am unable to penetrate, and content myself with ascribing to it qualities such as are equal to the production of the admitted effects? In science, is his the conduct which men pursue? Do they deny the existence and qualities of galvanism, because it is a supposable case, that they are but a form of a more general and comprehensive law? Science goes as far as knowledge conducts; and following her example, we ascend to an intelligence capable of producing the universe; and there reverently stop, adore, and love.

In fact, so essential and inwrought in the human mind is the idea of an intelligent Deity, that words which implicate it are blended with the very frame-work of all human language; so that we cannot speak of the universe, but we employ terms which lead the mind to God. The term 'effect' brings up its correlative term 'cause;' and is in itself a concession of the main point in debate. 'The works of nature,' 'the laws of nature,' betoken a worker and a lawgiver. And so even Atheists have found it impossible to reason against a God in any language which did not involve the admission of his existence; thus unintentionally showing that the judgment of the whole of human kind is against their God-denying theory. Nor is Mr. Owen himself an exception to this general fact. In the work which he designed to be the standard exposition of his doctrines, 'The Book of the New Moral World,'* formally dedicated to his late

* pp. 30, 96, 97.

Majesty, I find him speaking of his 'unknown cause' as having 'design' and 'intention,' 'unity of design,' as actually 'designing,' 'unfolding discoveries,' and being 'justified.' What are all these but qualities of intelligence? What but so many admissions that his 'unknown cause' is known in part?—or else instances of inconsistency little becoming one who charges all the world and in it, the great lights of humanity, with folly and hypocrisy? Where the folly lies I will not presume to say; but certainly I can see no proofs of superior wisdom in a theory which admits an intelligent cause of every human effect, but denies the intelligent cause of the universe, the most stupendous effect of all; which allows that every author has a mind endowed with similar qualities with those of his work, but sees no qualities in creation which indicate the attributes of its maker; which speaks of a 'design,' but denies a designer, and talks of an 'intention,' and even of a moral 'harmony,' in the very work in which he declares that we can know nothing of his attributes who 'intended' what he produced, and created the qualities and relations out of which only 'harmony' can ensue. In ordinary minds, the very words 'design,' 'intention,' and 'harmony,' bring up the ideas of kindred qualities in the power to whom they owe their birth; and so long as man is man—as long, I mean, as he remains constituted as he is—he will never observe an adaptation in his own powers, or in society, without referring it to an adequate cause; and if the qualities belong to the species, he will be infallibly led to the conclusion, that their author is a divine Intelligence; and that this author, the Sun of the Universe, is infinitely superior to the scattered rays of his power, wisdom, and benevolence, which are seen in his works.

There was once a state of opinion in society which

led to the saying—'Athanasius against the world, and the world against Athanasius;' and as Mr. Owen has chosen to set himself against the world in relation to its fundamental conviction, he must not be surprised if he find the world against him; nor is it difficult to predict which will prove the victor in so unequal a contest.

The fundamental doctrine of the religion of Jesus, that God is, that God is one, that God is a Father, that Mind, Intelligence, is the author of the universe, stands then unshaken by the assaults of Socialism, and is illustrated and confirmed by principles which it either employs, or cannot deny. In fact, the Creator of the universe himself has made most abundant provision for the acknowledgment, on the part of man, of his existence and attributes, in the multiplicity of evidence he has given alike in the fundamental principles of human reasoning, the essential sentiments of the human heart, and in the frame of 'the great globe' itself, and the minutest of its innumerable inhabitants; so that if we look throughout the whole structure of nature, whether to the insect whose life is literally but for a day, or to those stupendous orbs which roll in the regions of boundless space,—finding, as we do every where, adaptations as beautiful as they are wise and beneficent, —finding every where design, order, and harmony, we are irresistibly led not only to acknowledge the existence and operation of an infinite Intelligence, but to feel, in relation to the accumulated proofs of his Being and Providence, that earth is his footstool, and heaven his throne.

LECTURE V.

We come, on this occasion, to consider one avowed fundamental doctrine of Socialism, the great discovery which is to revolutionize the world. This discovery we shall find to be of that negative kind which, as I remarked in my last lecture, characterises the whole of this aspiring and boasted philosophy. And to those who know the means by which great social changes have, from time to time, been produced, namely, by the developement of some new truth, by a deeper insight into the active powers of the human breast, and, pre-eminently, by the awakening up of new and powerful sympathies, it cannot but appear singular that any great changes should be expected from a system which, for the most part, confines itself to a denial of established and long-cherished principles. There may, indeed, be occasions when a moral renovation begins by exploding customary errors; but this office of denying and confuting is merely preparatory: the denial pioneers the way to some great truth, some forgotten principle, some repository of moral power, which in itself contains the vital elements of individual and social reformation. But Socialism does not profess to have this source of power in reserve. Its point of support is in its negations themselves. Its office is the explosion of error, not the discovery of truth. And when we speak of its discoveries, all we can mean is, that it has found out—as it affirms—many errors in commonly-received opinions. It is, doubtless, supposable that mankind may be in darkness on many points of high concern,—but instead of throwing light on existing darkness, Socialism would

only make that darkness more dark. Its requirement is not dissimilar to his who should request the traveller at midnight to close or pluck out one of his eyes, in the assurance that by this means he would be better able to see and pursue his journey.

The doctrine of the religion of Jesus in regard to the constituent elements of human character, is this—character is created by the joint action of our wills and our circumstances, the power within the breast and the influences without, whereof the internal power is the superior, is the great shaping and directing principle of human destiny.

Socialism admits the one, and denies the other, of these two great influences. It honors and extols the less, it proscribes the greater. And thus having set aside the predominant efficacy of the human mind, it takes up a subordinate influence, and with it purposes to re-construct and regenerate society.

I regard this as a just and true statement of the issue which it is endeavouring to force on the attention of mankind. The sole question, when all mere accessaries are laid aside, is simply this—Whether the world within, or the world without the breast, is the predominant moral influence?

You will thus see at once that I do not deny the influence of circumstances on human character and destiny. I admit this element of our individual and social condition. I admit its existence and operation. I acknowledge its power for good or for ill. Undoubtedly it is mighty; and I would go with you to any reasonable length in your efforts to surround each individual with such circumstances as would act most favourably on his capabilities, and conduce most eminently to his happiness. And one reason why I offer opposition to your efforts is because I think that the atmosphere of circumstances which you would call into being, wants some of the most

influential—wants indeed the highest of all principles, namely, the recognition and enforcement of the inherent power of mind to shape and control outward events; and that still more influential and higher principle, the acknowledgment and realisation of man's relations to Deity, which constitute pure and undefiled religion. By your fundamental doctrines, you abridge your power for good, in cutting off and casting away circumstances which, in their very nature, must exert, and obviously even in a corrupt form have exerted, the greatest influence on human character. I affirm that in this particular Socialism is untrue to itself, for it curtails the very power by which it proposes to change the face of the world.

From my statement, it will also appear, that I do not go at all into the question of philosophical necessity. For the manner in which I shall treat the subject, it matters not whether that doctrine be true or false. It is a popular, not a metaphysical view of character that the place and the occasion ask for; and such I propose to give. The question in debate essentially is, whether mind or matter is the master power. Decide in favor of matter, or the outward world—then man's character may be formed for him, and not by him; decide in favor of mind, or the internal world—the inner man, then our character is formed at least as much by us, as it is for us.

Before, however, I proceed to the argument, I am bound to show that I have rightly understood and rightly stated the question which Socialism propounds.

From the Book of the New Moral World, I learn that Mr. Owen's doctrine is as follows:—

Man's character is the result of his organisation, and of the circumstances in which he is placed. So far there is nothing new. This is a doctrine which dates as far back as the first efforts to form a philosophy of cha-

racter. The question, however, comes—Does this organisation comprise not only a power of self-control, but a mastering influence over external circumstances? Socialism answers in the negative. It uses the following language:—'Man's whole character, physical, mental, and moral, is formed independently of himself.'* This, it must be confessed, is no very precise language to fall from the lips of one who values so meanly the intellect of all other men. 'Man's whole character is formed *independently of himself*,'—then he himself is something different from the whole of his character, for surely that which is independent of something else, is different, not to say distinct and separate from it. This dark and illogical statement, however, may receive some illustration from other passages;—accordingly, I read that 'man is altogether a being whose organisation, feelings, thoughts, will, and actions, are pre-determined for him by the influence of external circumstances acting upon his original constitution.'† Here, indeed, I might ask how his 'original constitution' is distinct from his 'organisation,' and again object that man cannot differ from his 'organisation, feelings, thoughts, will, and actions.' But without occupying time in making further quotations, it is sufficiently clear that circumstances are affirmed to be the pre-determining influence in human character; that they, acting on his original constitution, create man's character. The mind, therefore, is the thing created, circumstances are the creator;—the influence of mind, whatever else it may be, is passive—it is that which is acted on, mastered, and controlled; the influence of circumstances is active, is that which determines the whole character. This doctrine Socialism has condensed into an aphorism, and proclaims as its fundamental teaching, that 'man's character is

* Book of the New Moral World, page 4. † Ibid. page 20.

formed for him, and not by him.' In other words—words of the social prophet himself—'man's will is as much created for him as any other quality or faculty which has been given to him.'* 'It is evident that the whole character of man is formed for and not by the individual;'† 'the external‡ circumstances existing around individuals form their local, national, and general characters.' 'The character of man is, *without a single exception, always* formed for him. Man never did, nor is it possible he ever can, form his own character.'§ 'Man has been thus placed by the same power which has given a fixed and determinate character to all organised as well as unorganised forms, *at the mercy solely* of external objects; his hourly existence, his health, his strength, his thoughts and feelings and conduct, his *inferiority* or *superiority*, his *misery* or *happiness*, depend *altogether* upon the action of these objects upon the *passive* and ductile organs of his nature.'‖

We are now, then, I hope, in no danger of misunderstanding the question before us. I repeat, that when put in the mildest form, it is this—Whether the mind within, or matter without the breast, shapes and controls human destiny, not as an exclusive but a predominating influence? Is it true that 'man's character is formed for and not by him? You will observe that the aphorism contains two statements. It is not merely that man's character is formed for him. This might be only a strong and pointed way of asserting the admitted efficacy of circumstances. Much more than this—man's character is not formed by him.

The question, then, is—Which is the superior influ-

* Owen's Book of the New Moral World, p. 16.
† Ibid, page 25. ‡ Ibid, page 38.
§ Owen's Essays on the Formation of Character, page 36.
‖ Owen's Lectures in Manchester, page 24.

ence in the fomation of character, the human mind or external circumstances? To this issue the doctrine of the Socialists comes—by this issue it shall be tried. But as this is my, not their language, I shall also fight the battle on their own ground—that, I mean, of the celebrated social motto, 'Man's character is formed for and not by him.'

Let us, however, premise one more consideration. In what light are we to view this doctrine? It is propounded as 'laws and facts' of human nature drawn from observation. It is, then, the social theory of the formation of human character. It is this, and it is *nothing more.* Socialists are apt to speak of the doctrine in terms of the utmost assurance, and to represent it as of unquestionable truth. At the present moment I am not asserting that it is false; but whether true or false, it is merely their interpretation of man's moral history, it is merely the conclusion they draw from the observations they have made. As such, it can have no higher degree of certainty than that which attaches to the ordinary workings of the human understanding; and as Socialists are wont to represent that understanding to be universally depraved, their doctrines can, at the best, rest on but an insecure foundation; except, indeed, they are prepared to revive for themselves the theological claim of infallibility;—and certainly instances are but too abundant in which they appear to think that all wisdom is their peculiar portion. They, however, as well as other men, must have suffered from the injurious influence which they ascribe to 'the old irrational and immoral world;' and for this reason, if for no other, must be satisfied if they are placed no lower than on a par with other thinking men, and have their opinions judged by the ordinary rules of evidence. Now the distinctive feature of this doctrine is, as we have seen, that man's character is not formed by him. This is the allegation of Socialists. Evidence to substantiate their opinion

they do not adduce. They simply affirm a negative proposition—'Man's character is not formed by him.' The matter in debate, then, might be speedily brought to a termination. One affirmation is as good as another. I assert that man's character is formed by, as well as for him. Their negation is then nullified. A mere affirmation renders it void. What are statements worth which are unsupported by evidence? Mr. Owen, in failing to sustain his doctrine by evidence, has not entitled it even to an examination.

But I consent to descend from this high and vantage ground. I will act as if Socialists had, by the force of evidence, created a presumption in their favor. The philosophy of human character which they expound, I will bring to the test of experience and reason. They may be right—they may also have observed imperfectly and incompletely; and have reasoned rather under the influence of their passions and their wishes, than of a pure and enlightened intellect. What they propound, therefore, we will examine. If their theory is sufficient to account for ascertained facts, and for all ascertained facts, it may possibly be true; if it is insufficient, it must be false. Such is the method in which scientific theories are examined and judged; and Socialism cannot, in consequence, appeal against the tribunal. It is not by authority, it is by experience and reason I propose to decide the question. We will read the same book Mr. Owen has read; if we find no more than he has found, we will acknowledge that so far he may by possibility be in the right; if we find qualities of the human mind which he disowns, he is unquestionably in the wrong.

Now this book of the human character has been open and studied for some thousand years. Among its students have been the first intellects of the race. It has been seen and perused in almost every possible light.

Minds the most various have devoted their best attention to it; and Mr. Owen allows that the judgment of the world is against him. Which is the more likely to be right in the interpretation—they or he? Surely it is a strong presumption against any theory of the formation of human character, that it is contradicted by universal opinion. Were it some new study, new light might be expected. Were the question in debate one relating to minuter shades of character, we might conclude that his predecessors had failed to see what he has seen. Were his a view which they had but dimly perceived, we could imagine that increasing experience had brought out facts into bold relief. But the case is this. The world and its philosophers have agreed to assign a controlling power over every outward influence to the inborn energies of the human mind. This power Mr. Owen denies; its admission he regards as a gross mistake, and its enforcement as a 'deception.'* Well, then, may we ask—Is it likely that one man, or the species, on so broad a fact, and in so broad an issue, should labor under error?

It is not authority I now plead, but conviction, arising from enquiry, and based on evidence, and the decision amounts almost to infinity against unity.

But not merely does the world decide in opposition to Mr. Owen, that the mind possesses an independent power of control, but, as by universal consent, and emphatically by the master intellects who have enlightened and adorned it, that this innate power of mind is eminently and incomparably superior to every other earthly influence. Go to the writings of these lights of humanity, and you will find that no language is too strong for them to employ in depicting the triumphs of mind over matter, or in estimating the latent capabilities the mind possesses, or in describing the yet

* Book of the New Moral World, page 20.

more brilliant displays which they anticipate and predict. I grant, they may be mistaken; I claim for them no exemption from the possibility of error;—but I cannot think that possibility lessened when I pass from them to the single, not to say singular intellect of the social theorist.

But if circumstances have the exclusive and oppressive power which Socialism ascribes to them, what account can we give of the rise and progress of human civilization? At some time and in some place, there must have been a first human pair. Cast out by 'the unknown power,' which produces all the organizations of the world, they exist in the helplessness natural to the human infant, are exposed to the fury of the elements in a country yet unsubdued by man, and to the unmitigated ferocity of beasts of prey. What is to prevent their destruction? Circumstances are all adverse. Their own faculties are but in embryo. They have not even the power of locomotion. They lie on the earth from whose dreary womb they had just come, puling and helpless, with no possible resources in themselves, and nothing but enemies on every side around them. Such are their 'circumstances;' how they extricated themselves, how they rose to maturity, how they got a footing in the world, I leave Socialism to explain.

Let us, however, suppose—for on such a question we can afford to be liberal—that for once, by some strange chance, the 'unknown' and unintelligent power of the universe formed a full-grown pair of human beings; and let us also allow that it was possible for them to preserve their lives alike against the inclemency of heaven and earth, and the fierce passions of animals, more strong and as wily as they. There they are with the sole fruits of the earth, or the inferior animals for their sustenance. Again, every external influence is more or less adverse to them. Yet they survive, improve

their condition, transmit their species, invent arts, gain some first notions of science, found cities, build up empires, and surround themselves with varied means of gatification. What is this but the history of the predominance of mind? They subdue the world around them, and are not subdued by it. In other words, they control the outward, overpower and fashion—to some extent, according to their own will—the 'circumstances' in which they find themselves. In fact, they create, in a very considerable degree, the 'circumstances' which are to influence themselves and their successors. And yet, we are told that man's character is formed for and not by him. Who then, or what, formed the character of this first pair? They did not form it themselves—and 'circumstances' would have crushed them. Yet they live, have a character, and hand down their conquests to their descendants;—an obvious impossibility on any other assumption than that they had within themselves a power vastly superior to every external force. In fact, they and theirs found the world a howling wilderness—they made it into a garden; they found 'circumstances' against them—they brought 'circumstances' into some considerable agreement with their wills.

It is, indeed, of little consequence what you suppose the first condition of their 'circumstances' to be, whether more or less adverse. As soon as external nature made an impression on their minds, it roused them to action in order to enjoy, preserve, and multiply the good, if good were offered, and to overcome and turn to their own advantage the evil which infallibly must, to no small extent, have been their lot. But whatever the nature of the outward action, it did no more than call forth that power of the mind which enabled man to make the best of his then actual condition. The outward was but the stimulus. It had not even an influ-

ence till the action of the mind commenced; and the moment its operation begins, 'circumstances' bend to its control, and soon take the shape which the mind desires. That 'circumstances' would modify both that desire and the condition which resulted, I do not deny. The power of circumstances is admitted; but in the process to which I have alluded, it is, beyond a question, the mind and not matter which is the governing principle.

Then look at the spread and decay of civilization. Spots on the earth appear in human history now covered with the glory of the arts and sciences, and now left a prey to the abomination of desolation. Why is this? This glory, is it not the creation of the human mind—an emblem of its triumph over 'circumstances?' This desolation—Was it not caused by the failure of mental power, and the predominance of adverse external influences? A few leagues off, civilization takes up its abode and spreads blessings around it. Why? Some eminent mind has been born, and put forth its innate power. 'Circumstances,' therefore, yield before it, assume the shapes it wishes, and mould themselves, under its plastic hand, into more or less of grandeur and permanency. These institutions come under the influence of a tyrant, a conqueror, or a fool; and crumble away beneath the dissolving power of 'circumstances.' Again, on the same spot, civilization may revive, again decay, according as mind exerts or remits its control, and as the worse or the better qualities of character make themselves felt. Palestine, a country in no way distinguished for natural fertility, was once a land flowing with milk and honey. Why? Mind brought its creative power to bear upon its soil. It is now, with partial exceptions, a waste of hills without flocks, and plains without verdure. Why? Mind has left it to the devastating sway of 'circumstances.'

Sparta rises out of surrounding barrenness and social disorders, to a state of civilized renown, which remains permanent for centuries. A great mind has appeared and shaped 'circumstances' to his will. Athens, too, seats herself in the midst of a sterile land, and from the confines of a petty tract of country, gives law to many nations, and makes her benign influence felt, even for ages after she herself has sunk into decay. The reason is—she had her Solon, her Pericles, her Æschylus, her Socrates, her Plato, and her Demosthenes: men who rose superior, by the imperial power of intellect, to all the 'circumstances' by which they were surrounded, and continue to the present hour to give power to other minds to control and shape outward influences. Look at Cæsar,—what a change did his mind bring over the whole aspect of the world. Bonaparte, in modern times, broke and upturned nearly all the forms of existing civilization. Where, but in the predominating power of mind, will you find an adequate cause for these wide-spread results? Let the influence of 'circumstances' be estimated at their highest, what but his power of intellect and his indomitable will, made the poor lieutenant of artillery, in preference to every other military adventurer, into the Emperor of France and the temporary dictator of the continent? You tell me you admit the influence of his organisation; then, if you mean any thing, you admit the supreme efficiency of his mind, and cannot in the same breath assert that his character was formed for and not by him. The character of Bonaparte formed *for* him! 'Circumstances' his creator!—his, with whom nearly all the outward was in direct opposition to his progress, and who, more than myriads of other men, men in more 'favourable circumstances,' created a new order of social condition and social influences. And so, what raised Burns from the plough to a niche in the temple of his country's purest fame?

What took Arkwright from his barber's shop, and made him the creator of exhaustless mines of wealth? What enabled Watt, and others of the same stamp, to bring into existence a power which is doing a far higher work than multiplying works of human skill and convenience, in he facilities which it affords, with daily-increasing efficiency, for intercourse among men and nations, and thus for the furtherance of all the mental and moral good which is the best heritage, as it is the great civilizer, of humanity? In each of these cases, it was the predominance of mind over matter, of man's intellectual energies, of man's will over the adverse tendency of 'circumstances.' And what, now, does Socialism aim to effect, but to bring about a 'New Moral World,' by an appeal to the supreme director of human affairs,—the human mind? Yes; should its visions ever be realised, they will prove that 'circumstances' are as nothing, when the mind of man is brought in energetic array against their dominion. The powers that be are all to lay aside their cherished greatness of their own accord, persuaded and controlled by the offer of a better lot. Will not this be a triumph of mind? Mr. Owen's intellect will have transfused itself into the intellect of the world, and, as a consequence, dissolved its existing institutions, and created all things anew. And thus the success of Socialism would prove the confutation of its fundamental principle. In fact, if 'circumstances' are so overpowering as Socialism would have us believe, it would be idle to attempt to unbind the chains in which the world is held a willing captive. Nor, apart from the admission of the predominance of his own intellect and the force of his own will, can I perceive how socialists can give any satisfactory account of the formation of the character, plans, and efforts of their master, whom they represent as pursuing his purpose in the

very teeth of 'circumstances,' through good report and through ill report, through fair and foul opposition, through one long-continued series of personal and social sacrifices.

I am not unaware, that every superior mind takes an influence from the circumstances in which he is placed. If you descend to minuteness, it is not always easy to settle the exact proportions between what a superior mind receives and what he gives. But in broad and general measures, there is no difficulty in saying of many great men, that they were rather the creators than the creatures of circumstances; nor do I know how any man who possesses a tolerable acquaintance with history, can fail to point out individuals who have made revolutions, instead of being made by them, and thus proved themselves superior to the aggregate of social influences in the midst of which they appeared.

Let us, for a moment, confine our thoughts to the present day. The human mind now is surrounded by outward influences. What has brought them into being? Say 'the character of man is formed for and not by him,' and what rational account can you give? These influences are compounded of mental and physical elements. Whence the mental—if it is true as a universal proposition—that 'man's character is not formed by him'? Surely a part of these influences, as being mental, have sprung from the human mind. Else, whence are they? The outward world could not have given them birth, for to that world they belong not. Let, then, our actual 'circumstances' be ever so overpowering, yet up to this time at least, man has done something towards the formation of his own character. In fact, it has created what Socialism would designate its creators. In bygone ages the mind has given rise to the 'circumstances' which shape this age, and are destined to shape the ages

to come. And thus it is the mind of man which forges the chains in which to bind posterity. But who can believe that, having exerted a creative power up to now, the mind has at length resigned its office, is paralysed, and will, in future, quietly yield to the dominion of existing things? It is, on the contrary, my firm belief, that its efficiency has, from the first till the present hour, been gradually but steadily on the increase; and except I have misinterpreted the signs of the times, it is even now preparing to put forth new displays of its inherent power, to vindicate its supremacy, and to subdue, control, and make anew the combined influence of 'the circumstances' which surround us.

I will now ask you to descend with me into the retirement of private life, in order to see if the social theory of the formation of character is sufficient to explain acknowledged facts. You have been more or less intimately concerned with the education of children. Is it not your experience that their characters are as much formed by them as for them? In most families the train of circumstances through which children are conducted are not greatly dissimilar; yet how unlike are the results! Whence could this be, if the outward were the supreme influence? In such a case, it would, of course, level all inferior influences, and create a uniformity. It is no answer to say that you admit a diversity of original organization. I speak not of the existence of such a diversity, but of its power. That diversity, in the main, concentrates itself in what men have agreed to call mind; and it is, beyond a doubt, the formative principle in the production of character. The original endowments it is which give the bent to the mind, determine the train of influences to which it will submit, modify external circumstances, and, in a word, impart to the character its shape and complexion. Every per-

son has more or less of what may be termed individual force of character; a force which shows itself in the earliest period of childhood, and gathers strength up to maturity, not to say till the decline of life. And it is this original and unconquerable bent and impulse which determines the walk in life of each individual, and the nature and extent of influence which he is destined to exert. And where the force is found in any distinguished degree, all merely external influences are powerless to restrain and subdue it. Let the force be in favor of the exercises of the imagination, in how many instances does the biography of eminent literary men show us that it will break down all outward barriers. In vain a parent urges, entreats, and threatens; in vain sordid interest offers her golden visions; in vain poverty sets in hostile array the ills which wait on her victims; vain are legal bonds,—every consideration is broken through, nature is too strong for 'circumstances,' and poetry vindicates her rights. If the force is found in the animal propensities, and that force is of a predominating nature, neither the example of a Howard, nor the training of an Owen, can make the individual into a philanthropist. It is an idle dream that the slaughterers could ever have been the benefactors of humanity. It is equally idle to imagine that any outward influence could have made a Socrates and a Robespierre exchange characters. And how great soever the change of character which the former wrought in himself, the change was the work, not of circumstances, but of his own mind. It is, in fact, the mind, its peculiar turn—its tone, a tone which admits of endless variations,—it is this which shapes our course, modifies our education, as well as is modified by it, and gives rise to the innumerable diversities of the human species which we see around us. And, indeed, these diversities themselves are a sufficient

proof that circumstances are but of secondary power in the formation of character. Take any one class in society—the circumstances which affect that class are in the main nearly alike for each individual. Yet, in the same class, no two persons will you find bearing a marked resemblance. Each one's character is as dissimilar, to say the least, as dissimilar to that of his nearest likeness, as are their countenances or the tones of their voice. How could this be but for the overpowering influence of their mental diversities?

To revert to the family circle;—take any three children, surround them with the same influences, let those influences commence with a very early period of their being, what will be the result? Parents, what in your own houses has been the result? Identity? Similarity? Diversity? The three streams come from the same fountain-head, flow over a similar soil, yet their hue is diverse. And what has been the coloring principle? What modified the very first influence made on one of their minds? What made that first impression different from the impression produced at the same time on the mind of its associate? The complexion, the peculiar hue of the child's original endowments. And so onward till life shall end, this same spring, this elastic power, will exert its force. As it is, so in the main the character will be; and that in all the diversity of shades and hues of which the human character is susceptible. These things an observant parent well knows, and he knows also that whatever 'power of circumstances' he might bring to bear, he could not in this case make a child a distinguished mechanist, nor in that make a child an eminent musician, nor in another make a child a superior poet; equally does he see cases where the bent of the mind is so strong and elastic, that nothing, no 'circumstances' whatever, could prevent a child from

pursuing a literary course, or taking to a sea-faring life. These are cases which are constantly occurring in families, and the philosophy of 'circumstances' has no explanation to offer of them. They are obviously cases of the predominance of mind, and of character formed rather by, than for the individuals in question.

The peculiar disposition, in some cases, remains latent for years, and, if you look on such children, you may imagine that the education of mere 'circumstances' is going quietly on. I have seen what I refer to. All at once, however, a change comes. 'Circumstances' remain substantially the same; the same comfort, the same kindness, the same intellectual advantages—but the youth turns refractory, self-willed; he has his notions, and does his utmost to give them effect; paternal admonition and a mother's love interpose their influence; the opposition is softened, perhaps disappears for a brief period, but returns again with more force than ever;—now it gains the upper hand in the individual himself, perhaps in the family; certainly it modifies the ordinary 'circumstances' and tone of the family circle, and henceforth it becomes the guiding power of the life of the youth; it may be, the determining power for good or for ill of the whole household. To what are we to ascribe this and similar changes—changes in the intellectual as well as moral capacities—changes which change the whole sphere in which they operate,—to what but to the predominance of the internal power of the human being? I appeal also to your own individual feelings. System, I know, may do much to becloud the plainest lessons of the mind, and to suppress the strong instincts of the heart. Yet, in all cases, nature is too powerful for art; and I believe there are very few persons who could not, by a little close inspection, find enough in their own experience to settle the question

now in dispute. What, then, says the voice of consciousness? Does it declare that your character is formed 'for and not by you'—that you have nothing like an independent power of control over external things and internal emotions? You yield to passion, to temper; you suppress their workings; you yield in part, another time you suppress them in part, through all the varied moods of your mind;—you feel you have a power of election and control, a spontaneous self-acting power. I am not intimating that outward things and your bodily sensations have no influence over the exertion of that power; I merely affirm its existence. With some, indeed, owing to the want of mental discipline, the life may be scarcely more than in the germ; in others it has the strength of the full-grown oak. But in either case there it is, more difficult, I know, to be recognized in the one instance than the other; and on this account I think it is that Socialism, finding as yet its adherents among those whose higher faculties have been but imperfectly called forth, has been enabled to persuade some that their sole capacity is receptive; in other words, that their 'character is formed for and not by them.' It is, however, a very easy question that I ask you to carry to the bar of your own experience; namely—Can you control 'circumstances,' or can you not? Have you ever controlled them? Have you ever had to set yourself in array against outward influences—and did you in any case gain ought of success? Or can you control your own feelings, or can you not? Have you ever made the trial? Did you utterly fail? If not, then you are conscious of possessing a controlling power in your own minds,—then mind is superior to 'circumstances,'—then the one is active, the other passive; the one superior, the other inferior; and you do something to form your own character. And notice, it matters

not how small that something is; small as it may be, it is enough to put a negative on the proposition which asserts that 'man's character is formed for and not by him.'

Mr. Owen has looked, we may suppose, into his own mind, and being fully possessed with the one idea of his system, saw nothing correspondent with the modifying and controlling power of which I have spoken. Accordingly he illustrates his philosophy of character in the following words:—'The effects of the action of external circumstances upon the original constitution may be thus described. Suppose the organization at birth to be represented by A; and the first circumstance acting upon it be represented by B. A and B unite, and make a compound, represented, we will suppose, by C; the second circumstance which influences the organization shall be D, which then unites with the last compound C, making a new compound of character which we will call E:—and in this manner the character of each individual undergoes a continual change.'* And this instruction is given in connection with a philosophy whose fundamental teaching is that 'man's character is formed for and not by him'! Why; of what does the last compound E consist, but of the joint influences of the mind within and the world without? In fact, by his own showing, the mind does its part to form the 'circumstances' which modify it, and this through the whole of life. In other words, the mind enters as an essential element, as an original creative element in the formatien of our characters. Surely, then, it is idle to affirm that those characters 'are formed for and not by us.' If any one faculty more than another may be dignified by the term '*us*,' may be identified with

* Book of the New Moral World. page 6.

ourselves, it is the compound of internal qualities called the mind; and these, by the inadvertent admission of the great heresiarch himself, have an equal share in the formation of our characters. They then are formed, at least, as much by us as they are for us.

Mr. Owen also lays it down as a truth, that different organizations produce different results of character; nay, that it is they which form through life the distinctive character of each person.* Then let Socialism be consistent, and change its motto. If the organization of each individual, the organization in which mind surely is no mean element, gives his life its color, how can the omnipotence of 'circumstances' be maintained? how can it be affirmed, that our characters are formed for and not by us? Our organization, it will not be denied, is a part of us. It is admitted to be that part which chiefly makes us what we are. Consequently, we ourselves are chiefly concerned in the formation of our characters, our happiness, or our misery. It is not true, therefore, it cannot be true, that 'our characters are formed for and not by us.' Nothing but an abuse of language can give the slightest show of truth to this false and obtruded maxim. Place our 'organization among circumstances,' then you may raise a cloud of metaphysical dust, wherewith to blind the eye, but without thus confounding words which ordinarily represent things the most distinct, you have not the slightest chance of persuading men that their characters 'are formed for and not by them.'

But in what Mr. Owen himself designates his '*chemical* action' of the influence of external circumstances upon the organization,†—in his A. B. C. philosophy of character, he forgets one important consideration, I

* Book of the New Moral World, page 38. †Ibid, page 6.

mean, that in every successive state in which it is, the mind is essentially and constantly active. When, therefore, it has come into the condition which he denominates E, or any other, it is at once at work; modifying, by means of its own inherent qualities, the impressions it has received, and with the combined power which it thus gains, modifying also incessantly the passive influences of the outward world. It thus is perpetually occupied in gathering up strength, and gently, but effectually, goes forward to that ascendancy over 'circumstances' which is its peculiar birthright. In fact, as I have already intimated, 'circumstances' are not influences, till they are received and felt by the mind, and then they rise or sink in importance, and take that bent and color which the mind is fitted to give them. They influence it, I admit, again and again—but in the main, they are mastered and controlled. In fact, to employ an illustration, circumstances are not the parent river, but a tributary stream.

Finally, let us try the great social discovery, the grand revolutionary maxim, by an application of it to a few cases, where we are in no danger of misunderstanding ourselves or others. What, then, are those things of which it may be truly affirmed? Our garments are made 'for and not by us.' Our houses are made 'for and not by us.' Is their condition the same as that of our characters? Who does not feel the incongruity of asserting the same thing of his character as of his clothing? Again;—of the animal creation, it may, in a qualified sense, be said, their condition is 'formed for them and not by them.' Is there, then, no difference between the process by which the condition of the animal and that by which the character of man is produced? Yet their condition partakes of the compound influence of organization and circumstances. We are, then, to believe that

the process is identically the same. Does such a conclusion, however, agree with your experience—your observation—your convictions? If not, where is the essential difference? What distinguishes the one process from the other? What new element intervenes between the formation of a coat and the formation of character—between the production of a well-fed bullock and the creation of a wise and benevolent man? It is reason—an active principle, a self-acting and spontaneous power, a power of self-government, a power of control over outward influences, a power capable of comparing ideas, adjudicating betwixt rival influences, of forming judgments respecting moral and physical qualities—of approving, condemning, electing, and casting away. And of a being possessed of such a power, can it with any propriety be said that his character or his destiny is formed 'for and not by him?' Change the ordinary meaning of the words you employ to embody the essence of your doctrine, you may be right—retain them, speak so as not to mislead, so as to be understood, so as to meet the customary apprehensions of men,—you must be wrong, you are condemned at the bar of public opinion.

And did I not know how much the baneful influence of false ideas is frequently counteracted by the better feelings of our nature, by those instincts and impulses which men may becloud but cannot destroy, I should entertain a very lively fear that a doctrine which assimilates the formation of character to a 'chemical action,' and reduces it to a level with the process pursued in preparing flocks and herds for the shambles, would end in lowering its adherents to the grossness of a mere animal and physical condition. Certainly so far as the influence of this degrading aphorism extends, it can of itself produce no distinguished excellence, and

for myself I see not how you could well persuade men of a more injurious doctrine than that which, by affirming that their 'characters are formed for and not by them,' teaches that in ourselves we have no power of self-control —no power of control over the external world—but, like moats in the sunbeam, are borne hither and thither—of a necessity, an irresistible necessity borne hither and thither, by every gust within our bosoms, and every gust without.

To complete the demoralizing tendency of this doctrine, there needed but the addition, that man is irresponsible for his actions, and perishes in the hour that he draws his last earthly breath.

LECTURE VI.

WERE there any room for doubt whether Socialism, as professed by Mr. Owen and his followers, goes to the enormous lengths which my last Lecture implies, all hesitation would be at once removed by the fact, that another of its avowed fundamental teachings is the unqualified denial of all responsibility on the part of man. This denial is set forth as a necessary consequence of the maxim, that 'Man's character is formed for and not by him.' The language of the sect is in brief as follows:—'Every part of the character of man is formed for him by circumstances pre-existing to the will, which decides his actions; and he is therefore irresponsible for the character formed for him, whatever it may be.'* 'Man is not to be made a being of superior order by teaching him that he is responsible for his will and his actions. This is putting the most formidable obstacle in the way of attaining the most valuable knowledge that man can acquire; it is the direct method to prevent him from knowing himself; and it teaches him to believe himself another kind of being from that which he really is; and, in consequence, to err in all his thoughts and actions respecting his own nature and human nature generally.'† 'That greatest of all errors, that individuals form their own character; this hydra of human calamity; this immolator of every principle of rationality; this monster, which hitherto has effectually guarded every avenue that can lead to true benevolence and active kindness.'‡ 'As

* Book of the New Moral World, page 20. † Ibid, page 20.
‡ Owen's Formation of Character, page 54.

I write, my blood is chilled at the horrid effects arising from the principle of human responsibility.'* 'Man is made by a being unknown to himself, and without his consent; and therefore cannot, with any degree of justice or of common sense, be made accountable for the qualities of his nature, or for what he himself has been made to be;—to make him accountable for them, must engender all the bad passions, keep men ignorant, produce poverty, crime, disease, and misery continually, and make man an inconsistent and irrational being.'†

These statements are beyond a question sufficiently explicit. We cannot mistake their meaning; as little can we exaggerate their tenor. Man is produced by a power unknown to him, and without his consent; and is, in consequence, irresponsible. He is entirely the creature of circumstances; and is, in consequence, irresponsible.

Here we see that Atheism is an essential part of the Social system. The power that produced man is unknown to him; and, consequently, he is irresponsible. The constructor of Socialism felt, that if he admitted an intelligent First Cause, he could not, with any show of truth, put a negative on the responsibility of the being whom, in creating him, God made in his own likeness, and thereby endowed with a power of self-control; and with this feeling, in order to do away with man's responsibility, he first disowned a primary Intelligence.

I also remark, in passing into the subject, that we have in these statements another instance of that absence of evidence to which I had occasion to allude in the preceding lecture. The only show of argument we find is in the attempt which is made to connect together the several propositions which combine to make up the Socialist theory. This apart, the rest of the assertions are

* Clarke, page 8. † Book of the New Moral World, page 34.

mere assertions; they are the unsupported declarations of the master; they are this and nothing more, though announced under the imposing title of 'Facts' and 'Laws.' And I cannot but subjoin that we may add this proof to the many already in being, of the credulity of unbelief. The master affirms; the scholars yield implicit credence; and at the very time that they assail established opinions, and charge all other men with being easy and superstitious in their faith, they themselves receive opinions on authority and without evidence, and are loud and fierce in the maintenance of their adopted notions, far more than would be proper even if they had been established beyond the possibility of a question.

I stand here this evening to assert the all but universally-received doctrine of moral responsibility; a doctrine which, if any doctrine does, finds support in the entire texture of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is man's *moral* responsibility which I assert;—it is man's moral responsibility which is asserted in the Christian Scriptures. Responsibility for abstract opinions is taught neither by Jesus nor the laws of the human mind. So far as opinion is separated from moral influences, man is not answerable, inasmuch as it is the inevitable result of evidence acting on his mental constitution. Conviction is not subject to the will, 'neither, indeed, can be.' But over our moral condition, and over the actions which ensue, we have a power of control; and to the extent to which that power of control goes, and no further, we may justifiably be held responsible for our feelings and our conduct. Within the range in which we have in each case a spontaneous power of control and of action, we are, and we ought to be, responsible. 'The powers which be in' our breast are of God; and so far as he has made them, whether originally or in the actual circumstances of each individual, capable of self-direction, so far are we answerable to him for the condi-

tion into which we bring them, and the uses to which we apply them.

This is the position which I lay down in opposition to the doctrine I oppose; and with this position you will see that I make no claim for responsibility in regard to opinions, any farther than they result from our moral state; nor for responsibility in regard to our moral state, any further than as it is of our own formation. Here, then, is full latitude for all the allowance which circumstances that we did not individually originate, and could not control, may justifiably require; an allowance which, though in strictness man is unable to estimate in the case of his fellow-man, the unerring Judge of heaven and earth has doubtless both the ability and the will to determine and make, with the nicest regard to the peculiarities of our individual condition.

By this position, I also at once relieve the doctrine of moral responsibility from the Socialist objection, that man was formed without his consent by an unknown power. However this may be, he finds himself possessed of certain capacities, and under the dominion of certain laws, by his regard to which his character and his happiness are created. As a fact, then, his destiny, within the limitations I have made, are in his own hands, and all the reasonings in the world cannot prevent him from 'eating of the fruit of his doings.' The laws of his being he knows, or may know, if he does not know their author;—the consequences of his emotions and actions he must feel and undergo, though he was no party to the elements out of which they originate. It is a fact which no denial can supersede, that he is responsible, inasmuch as his happiness and misery depend on his use of his powers and opportunities. Responsibility is wrought into his frame by the power which made him. This is the main view which I shall illustrate and enforce; and in this view lies the very essence of moral responsibility, under whatever aspects it may be set forth.

Some people seem to have no idea of responsibility except as exhibited in certain outward forms. A judge, a judgment-seat, the formalities of a trial, which are mere accidents in the case, they identify with responsibility itself. Responsibility consists not in these external and dramatic representations, but in the liability under which we are to take the consequences of our own actions. And the justification of it is found in the fact, that we have a power within us of self-control, so far as we are responsible. Were I, indeed, arguing with a Christian, I should maintain that man was responsible, because the will of the Deity had made him so, with a view to the furtherance of his greatest possible happiness; and in such a case, I might justifiably ask, if the Creator had no right over the creature of his own hands, especially when his aim, in regard to his child, was to shield him from harm, and lead him on to the highest good of which his nature was susceptible? But I will even ask the socialist what he can gain by pleading that he knows not the power which made him, and that he was brought into being without his own consent. Will that plea annihilate the laws under which he exists —will it nullify the fact, that as is the condition of his heart and the tenor of his life, so also is his experience of good or of ill? But look at the plea itself. If it is true of man, it is universally true. If it avails to set man free from responsibility, it avails to divest man of all right of control over inferior creatures. Why, then, is the beast of draught or of burden required to use for man's benefit the powers with whose origination it had no part? More of a machine no animal can be than Socialism makes man. In fact, the human and the brute animal are, in the main, placed on a level by it, for the character of both are 'formed for and not by them.' What right, then, can Socialism have to require and exact the services of the lower animals? Is it the right

of the strongest? If you make them amenable to that right, how can you justifiably refuse to be liable to the same measures? If you repudiate that right in relation to your own being, you cannot consistently enforce its application on your fellow animal. Inherent rights you cannot plead, for you have no independent power within your breast; you are but as are the brutes, 'the creature of circumstances.' In fact, I know not on what ground you can plead against the unknown power which made you. That power is deaf to your voice, for in your creed it is unintelligent. You are in the hands of an irresistible destiny, and can but submit. 'Non-resistance and passive obedience' are requirements which your own doctrines impose upon you, for 'the unknown power' is too strong for your reclamation; and the very right of appeal you have forfeited, by declaring that you are, and must be, what circumstances make you, and as such, possess no inalienable rights of mental independence. As well may the ox rebel against the blow which takes away his life, as 'the mere creature of circumstances,' the plaything of resistless destiny, cry out against his lot. You have tied up your own hands: you have silenced your own tongue: you have set aside a throne of grace, when you have asserted that you have no power but that which 'the unknown cause' of the universe has 'compelled' you 'to receive;'* you have bound yourselves in the chains of fate, you have asserted that you are powerless captives, and have thereby surrendered all the rights of intelligence.

From the position which I have taken up it will moreover be seen, that in asserting moral responsibility I do not assert a system of mere penal retribution. Socialists appear to have identified responsibility with the law which Jesus exploded, of 'an eye for an eye,

* Book of the New Moral World.

and a tooth for a tooth.'* Were this the teaching of Christianity, I should have no defence to offer on its behalf. I hold that the infliction of evil in return for evil, of pain as a mere penalty of transgression, is but to double the wrong. Such may have been the effect, in some instances even the design, of human laws,—but all the measures of the Deity, and all the principles of the religion of Christ, are preventive and remedial. Their very aim, as well as their effect, is to remove the evil, to heal the wound, to restore the moral health—nay, to render it more stable and vigorous—to carry forward the education of man, and raise him to the highest happiness and dignity of which his nature is capable. And it is this very doctrine of responsibility—this much-misunderstood and greatly-abused doctrine, which is the essential condition of human improvement, and the great instrument by which Providence works out the good of the rational creation. Were man not responsible—were there no established connexion between moral causes and effects—were we not necessitated to take the consequences of our actions—were we not, to some extent, the creatures of habit—we could in no way be subject to moral law, we could not in any case reckon on the actions one of another, nor could the creative power of the universe, however wise and benevolent, effectuate its purposes respecting us; no more could we, in our own individual cases, calculate the results of our actions, or secure the effect of our designs. Moral law would disappear. Chance and uncertainty would be universal. We should, in reality, be what Socialism would make man—the passive creature of outward circumstances—the sport of a blind, irresistible destiny.

You have heard of the baneful consequences which Socialism is pleased to ascribe to the prevalence of the

† Clarke's Christian's Looking Glass, p. 8.

doctrine of responsibility; I shall now trace some of the innumerable evils which would ensue from its entire supercession. We shall thus be able to judge whether or not it is 'a doctrine worthy of all acceptation.'

Say that man's character is formed for and not by him, and that, in consequence, he is irresponsible; then, of course, he can neither be praised nor blamed. The inference is admitted by Socialists; praise and blame they profess to disallow.* I could easily show, from their own publications, that they are unfaithful to the deduction; but I am more desirous to see to what consequences its consistent application would lead mankind.

What is praise? The expression of approval. Blame? The expression of disapproval. Both are forbidden. Now let us see what kind of a moral education you could give without these influences. Take a child as yet untrained and unimpressed. He has nothing, as Socialism affirms, but his organization. His mind is a blank. He will be, in character, what circumstances make him. You wish to give him a moral education; you must not use praise or blame, not in word, not in look, not in manner. How will you teach him to distinguish between right and wrong? How will you lead him to associate pleasing emotions with one kind of action, and unpleasing emotions with another? You must express no approval, you must express no disapproval; neither praise him for what is right, nor blame him for what is wrong. Where, then, are the external circumstances which are to form his moral character? Wrong from right he does not know;—if you, his mother, in the tenderness of your heart, at beholding him do well, say to him, in the soft tones of your own love, 'that is right,' —if your eye kindles on his with glad affection, when you see the better part of character display its qualities,

* Book of the New Moral World, page 7.

you are disobedient to the requirements of Socialism, and have forfeited your claim to be considered a good instructor of your child. What, then, are you to do? How form your child's moral feelings? Nay, what are you to do, in relation to that amiable necessity of your nature, which, in spite of system, throws the looks and tones of tender approbation into your eyes and voice, when you behold your little ones innocently enjoying the pleasures which God and you have provided for them? Are you to restrain and annihilate the purest and strongest impulses of your nature? Yes, if Socialism is true. But that your own heart will tell you cannot be true, which requires you to be untrue to emotions, at once so pure, so useful, and so delightful, as the approving emotions of the maternal breast.

Let us, however, suppose that the child has passed the few first years of his life without any moral impressions whatever. He has reached the period, when the lower passions begin to act? To insulate him from every thing which may arouse them, is an impossibility, not even dreamed of anywhere, except, perhaps, in the land of Socialist illusions. The child, then, will not fail to manifest grief, dissatisfaction, vexation, it may be anger, probably revenge. How are you to repress these first risings of pssion? Blame the child you must not, nor give utterance to a word or a look of disapprobation. Devoid, as he is, of any notion of moral distinctions, he will be led to utter an untruth. Whence is the correcting influence to come? Or let us imagine—it could be nothing but an imagination—that his little life is one unbroken tenor of gentleness, affection, and truth, never even ruffled by pain. Beware you do not express your approval by the warmth of your motherly embrace; keep what love you have deep down in the recesses of your bosom, lest your very conduct should signify praise, and tend to give him a false education. Well,

then, he thus grows up to riper years without any moral distinctions whatever. In his eyes, one course of conduct is as right as another; his only guide is his love of pleasure and dislike of pain. Thus he goes into the world. What can preserve him from moral ruin? Or send him into 'community;' will he not take gratification, as would the brute, wherever and under whatever circumstances it may present itself? What should prevent him? He does not know wrong from right, he cannot know them, for the ideas of wrong and right cannot be communicated to a child, without the employment of terms which imply approval or disapproval, praise or blame. In early education, at least, right is nothing more than what the parent approves; wrong is that which he disapproves; and long before reason can be so formed and matured, as to admit of the metaphysical conceptions which these terms involve, your child will have had to act, will have done no little to form his character, and thus be thrown on himself for guidance, without being possessed of any moral resources.

Again; annihilate merit and demerit, praise and blame, you annihilate gratitude. Why should I be grateful to a mere animated machine? True, he has saved my life at the peril of his own. But he did no more than he was 'compelled' to do. The impulse which forced him to risk his life, was as blind and resistless as that which made the waters overwhelm me. Or, suppose that my father has made ceaseless sacrifices in order to give me a superior education; or that having lost my parents, a stranger 'took me up,' and proved, in the best sense of the word, a father to me, a father to my mind and heart. Why should I be thankful? He acted only as he was 'compelled.' It was not his will, but his 'circumstances acting on his organization,' that made him beneficent to me. And if I but feel a thrill of pleasure at the sight of him, if even his name makes my heart

throb with pleasure, if I am unable to avoid these old-fashioned emotions, at least I must not give them their customary name; he had no merit, he deserves no gratitude. Or, should I succeed in hardening my breast to these pleasing impulses, and stifle the voice of nature, my benefactor cannot charge me with ingratitude, nor consider me blame-worthy: I am but the creature of irresistible circumstances, and deserve no blame, as he deserves no praise. And so let us discontinue our superstitious veneration for the great and good men of by-gone days. You have been taught to think with gratitude and reverence of Sydney, Russell, and Hampden, of Socrates, Milton, and Locke; of those who have been prodigal of their blood, in vindication of social liberty, or labored in the birth of thoughts and feelings which asserted, claimed, and won the priceless dower of human rights; but your sentiments are only the puerilities of the old immoral and irrational world.' The time is come for you to be men in intellect; and, in being so, to deny the merit of the patriots and benefactors of the past, and to rid your breats of the idolatries with which you find them beset.

Where, too, on this system, is there ground for love or affection to take root and grow? These holy sentiments spring not so much from the mere receipt of benefits, as from a sense of favors received,—of a kind intention, of a self-denying effort, of sacrifice willingly and cheerfully undergone by the beloved object on our behalf. Complacency and passion are not love; we love those who love us, who study our happiness, labor to further it, and refuse not even pain and sacrifice to contribute to our comfort. But in 'The New Moral World,' love will lose these inspirations, and sink into a mere exchange of animal pleasures. One organization will blindly act pleasurably on another organization because it cannot help it; and in such a state, affection

will find no resting-place for the sole of its foot. Make man the mere creature of circumstances, destroy his will, and it is as proper to talk of 'the loves of the plants,' or of your affection for a stream of water, as of love toward parent, child, or wife.

And thus may those of you who are now bound together by the dear ties of gratitude, love, or consanguinity, clearly perceive of what a 'paradise' of the affections the realization of 'community' will put you into possession.

Once more: if there is no merit, no demerit, no praise, no blame, no gratitude, no affection, if man is nothing more than an animated machine, the creature of circumstances acting on his organization, so also is there no virtue, no vice. Virtue and vice regard not so much the outward act, as the motive, the design. The tree which falls and kills a human being, is not vicious. The dog that rescues a man from drowning, is not virtuous. The mere infliction of pain does not constitute vice; the communication of pleasure does not amount to virtue. The essence of the ideas which these terms involve, lies in the will. Annihilate it, you annihilate them. Make man a reasoning machine, you render him incapable of virtue or vice. There is no escape from this conclusion, but in changing the meaning of the terms. And so, in a word, must Socialism revolutionise the whole language not of one nation, but of humanity, before it can find ground whereon to take a secure position. Nay, it has a yet harder task; it must revolutionise the human heart, it must reach and destroy all the minute fibres of affection, which have twined themselves around our moral life, and eradicate the firmest and most subtle associations that have grown into the ideas and convictions of our minds. But what, my friends, are we to think of a system of morals, which destroys the very essence of morality, at the same time that it sweeps away, with

a rough and unsparing hand, all the affections which constitute the charm and the security of domestic and social life?

This is not all. Other consequences, not less frightful, ensue from the fundamental teachings of Socialism. As man has neither merit nor demerit, virtue nor vice, so does he sustain no moral relation with God, and has, in consequence, no hope for futurity. Yes! I err, he has a hope, if that may be termed hope which he possesses in common with the beast which, in perishing, passes in the unconscious elements of his nature into another beast, or perchance into a tree, or a river, or a cloud, or, it may even be, rises into the dignity of 'the first of animals,' man. You have heard of the doctrine of the heathen sage, Pythagoras,—

'What, then, is death, but ancient matter drest
In some new figure, and a varied vest?
Thus all things are but altered, nothing dies:
And here or there the unbodied spirit flies,
By time, or force, or sickness dispossessed,
And lodges where it lights, in man or beast;
Or hunts without, till ready limbs it find,
And actuates those according to their kind,
From tenement to tenement is tost,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost.

* * * * *

So death, thus call'd, can but the form deface,
The immortal soul flies out in empty space,
To seek her fortune in some other place.'

Ovid. Metam. Dryden's Translation.

But I do Pythagoras injustice. Socialism disowns the 'immortal soul;' with it nothing is immortal bu 'the unknown power,' and omnipotent circumstances. Life is but a transition into death, and death only a change of organisations. Hear its own words,—'All men come from the same general elements; all live upon the same general atmosphere; and, at dissolution, each

particular organisation returns to the same general elements, to give new life to new compounds, and to reanimate continually improving organisations: thus forming the future *eternal* life, to which *probably* there will be no *termination;*'* 'death itself will be considered simply as a change of one organisation for another.'† Such is the hope which the Socialist has for futurity. With no moral relation to 'the Unknown Cause of the universe,' no spiritual affections, 'no worship, no forms and ceremonies, no temples, no prayers,'‡ no merit, no demerit, no virtue, no vice, he lives and dies like his brother animals, and passes into 'the general elements' of nature, and may possibly, by some good chance, reappear in an improved organisation. So that the hope of the Socialist reformer is similar to that which the grazier entertains for his cattle, in the continual improvement of the breed. And this is a picture of man! of man newly created after the model of Socialism:—but for myself, I must say, in the words of our great dramatic poet,

> 'I think he be transformed into a beast,
> For I can no where find him like a man.'
>
> *As You Like It, act* 2, *s.* 7.

Such is the consummation to which the doctrine of moral irresponsibility conducts. Its advocates are without God and 'without hope in the world.'

But a doctrine which denies the spirituality of man must be false. It is equally true that a doctrine which disowns a future state of consciousness, is in direct hostility to the great wants and wishes of humanity. One of the Socialist writers has said, 'If we have human nature with us, we cannot fail.'§ I reply, you have human nature against you in its strongest and holiest

* Book of the New Moral World, page 31. † Ibid, page 43.
‡ Religion of the New Moral World. § Horton, page 13.

instincts, and therefore cannot succeed. Is there one lesson which comes forth more prominently and fully from the history of our race, than that man is a spiritual being; has, I mean, affections and sympathies, which lead and bind him to the intelligent Creator and Guardian of humanity, and carry forward his thoughts and yearnings to a life of happiness beyond the grave? The Socialist may term this superstition. A hard name does not alter a fact. And I undertake to prove that man is as much a spiritual, as he is an intellectual, a moral, or a social being. Whence does Socialism learn that we possess animal and intellectual faculties? Whence does it deduce its doctrine of the resistlessness of circumstances? Whence, but from the history of our race? He has seen manifestations which lead him to the acknowledgment, as to the only adequate cause, that man is possessed of animal and intellectual aptitudes. What, then, does the same authority say in regard to man's alleged spiritual capacities? Is it not written down in the same page, which sets forth our inferior qualities, that we are beings whose affections ascend to the infinite, and pass onward into a futurity of conscious being? Go into whatever land you will in the history of man, you will find indications of his spirituality. What else is the meaning of the altar of unshapen stone, or the temple which either presses the earth with its stupendous mass, or rises in graceful spires, towering like the spirit itself to the skies? Whence, else, the never-failing existence of a priesthood;—whence the fearful power which, from time to time, the priesthood has exercised over the mind and heart? It is to no purpose that you tell me of the corruptions which have connected themselves with the principle. These illustrate, not deny the fact. The greater the weight of the corruption, the stronger the power of the principle. Deeply seated, indeed, in the human breast must those sentiments be, which all the

evils that the lower passions have brought upon it have not been able to crush. No one of our faculties has stood so severe a trial: and I will add, that in proportion as civilisation has advanced, so have the spiritual affections grown in strength as well as purity; nor in the present day, notwithstanding all the assaults of Socialism and other forms of infidelity, do they appear less elastic, less vigorous, than at any preceding period. Ask your own hearts; carry your thoughts over the several families of the earth. Has the name of God ceased to be hallowed? Has the hope of futurity died away? Here and there you find an individual who declares he reverences not the one, and has no desire for the other. But in comparison with the race, these are no more frequent than monstrous births, or any other departure from a general law. Even those who see not the evidence, still entertain the desire, if not the hope, of a futurity. It is, in fact, wrought into the primary constituent elements of our moral being. Times, indeed, there may be, when a cloud of doubt may come over the heart, and instances in which a life of profligacy may undermine the desire; but nature will re-assert her power, and infuse hope where she cannot communicate assurance, prompting language like in meaning to what is expressed in this 'magnificent stanza:'

'Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice, we fear'd to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right.'
Childe Harold, canto 2, *stanza* 8.

There spoke the inextinguishable voice of humanity. Life is too good a thing to be resigned without a hope

of its renewal. All its happy hours, all its pleasant memories, all its dear ties bind and hold us to it. Even its pains and its mysteries make us long for the adjustments and disclosures which we fondly hope a future state will bring; and the deep and awful reverence which our individual consciousness and the grandeurs of the universe have led us to feel towards God, prompt and invigorate our 'longing after immortality.' Such being the fact, humanity is against Socialism, because Socialism is against its highest, purest, and most durable yearnings. There may be those who would rather not incur the consequences which moral responsibility brings; but let the good which such immunity offers be as great as its advocates delusively imagine, the human mind would feel the price too large, if it must barter away its power of self-control, its best earthly affections, its connexion with the benefactor of the universe, and its hope of immortality.

I have disproved the doctrine of irresponsibility, by exhibiting the absurdities which it involves. I will now disprove it by its own principles. I will take the Socialist on his own ground, and show that, however he may theorise, he is in fact responsible. I say in fact. I beg that my language may be marked. You cannot reason yourselves out of laws of your being,—laws which are as intimately bound up with your very nature as is the principle of life with the structure of your frames.

It will not be denied, that man is so constituted in regard to the elements of his own nature, and so circumstanced in relation to his fellows in society and to the external world, that certain invariable effects always follow from the same causes. Look at the influence of intemperance on the frame of your body. Notice the consequences of a neglected education. Passion, you know, disturbs and agitates the breast. The sequence of cause and effect is as intimate in regard to the

character, as it is in respect of the body. Withhold sustenance, the body suffers derangement. Refuse knowledge, the mind is disordered. Abandon the temper to its own unrestrained impulses, the life is like a troubled sea. Nor is it more certain, that an unsustained body will fall towards the earth, than that the unkind and unfriendly man will make himself many enemies, and gain no true friends. Universal and most intimate is the moral connexion of cause and effect. Love is the parent of love; anger produces anger; an injury calls forth retribution; generosity kindles a sense of gratitude.

In the moral, then, as well as in the natural world, we find ourselves in the region of law. The regular succession of cause and effect, like producing like in every possible variety of degree and hue, is the condition in which humanity is placed. What is this but the universal prevalence of law? This, then, is the state into which 'the unknown cause of the universe,' has introduced the human family. Say that the cause is as unintelligent as it is unknown, still you are enslaved to the laws of your being. With those, indeed, who admit and adore a primary intelligence, the truth of their being responsible ensues immediately from the establishment of the existence of moral law. That law is to them but the will of God, and so soon as they feel its bonds, they also feel their answerableness to the supreme Author of law. But if you deny the lawgiver, you cannot abolish the law. That still exists, and vindicates its authority by influences and penalties from which there is literally no escape. You are, then, responsible to the indestructible laws of your being. You are not left to live as you list. Not an act can you perform, not a word can you utter, not a thought can you think, but you are made responsible, in the good or evil consequences with which you are visited.

Every evanescent affection, as well as your most deliberate acts, contributes something to form your character, and to assert and illustrate your moral responsibility. The assertion, therefore, that you are unanswerable for your conduct, is but an idle word. You cannot even make the trial of your being irresponsible, without exhibiting the folly of the idea. How will you set about the experiment? The mere assertion is but empty breath. Live, then, as if you were irresponsible—but O! live not so long, for the consequences will be most baleful;—must they not be so, if you take no thought of your actions, no care of your heart, and regard neither God nor man? To put away responsibility is to affirm that your will, your passions, or your circumstances shall be your guide, if guide they can be called; and the experience of their unrestrained influence but for a day, will give but too mournful evidence of the responsibility under which you lie. In fact you may, with as much propriety, declare yourself free from the laws of the external world, and thereupon, to furnish a proof, cast yourself from a precipice, or plunge into the raging ocean, or defy the destructiveness of fire. You are surrounded and hedged in by law, law prevades your whole being,—every feeling you entertain, as much as every breath you draw. In this fact consists the essence of responsibility. And every effort you make to set the fact aside, will but illustrate its irreversibleness. The laws of your mental and moral life cannot be erased but with the dissolution of your frame. They operate from the first to the last hour of existence. Your present character is but the consequence of your affections, thoughts, and actions, in connexion with the influence of the circumstances through which you have passed,—which circumstances you yourself have done much to create; and your actual happiness or misery is a declaration, by fact, of the responsibility of your moral nature. 'Now,' says our Lord, 'is the

judgment of this world,' and 'now,' may every human being say, at every period of his life, and still more emphatically when a peculiar crisis has roused and concentrated into intense misery, or exquisite happiness, the good or ill which lies in his character,—'now is the judgment of my past life—now is the hand of retribution at work—verily I have my reward, and deeply feel how thoroughly the principle of responsibility is wrought into my whole existence.' Even a child's experience of life is enough to show that the error of Socialism is a contradiction to the laws of the moral world. Look at the disingenuous, the self-willed, the refractory boy; is he happy like his fellow who loves and keeps the truth, studies his parents' wishes, and diligently executes their commands? Cut an individual off from the society of his fellows—place him on some desert island—has he escaped from his responsibility? Let him yield to despondency—despondency will prove the parent of despair. Let him give full indulgence to his appetites and passions, abandon all self-control, and throw himself wild from every rational restraint,—he commits the crime of moral self destruction. Is there here no responsibility, no retribution, no punishment? Or take an instance among a class of men who are less obnoxious to the outward restraints of responsibility than any other human beings—take a slave owner:—he has, from the dawn of life till now, exercised unrestrained dominion over others; his will has been his only acknowledged law; labor he imposed, pains he inflicted as he chose; and he held and exercised, with little effectual check, the power of life and death. He may appear free from responsibility—is he so in fact? What is his mental and moral condition? It is worse, even, than that of the slaves over whom he has tyrannised. With an ungovernable temper, with passions that the slightest cross kindles into rage, with a cruel and malicious heart, with an unstrung,

a prematurely emaciated body, he is a wretched and degraded being, absolute master as he is of the goods and lives of hundreds of his fellow-creatures, and possessed of every external source of gratification: a just recompense has overtaken him, and with too much reason he may say,

> 'The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
> I planted,—they have torn me,—and I bleed:
> I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.'

Now what retribution would you have more than this? What other proof is needed of man's individual responsibility?

But more than the doctrine of individual responsibility is involved in this, and, indeed, in every case of the moral consequences of our actions. 'We are not responsible,' says the Socialist, 'to society;'—who then, or what, returns in kind the fruit of our doings? The slave-master even is responsible to his slaves, and from them, in no inconsiderable degree, he receives the retribution he has merited. It is a law of the moral as much as of the physical world, that action and re-action are equal and in opposite directions. The blow you give rebounds on yourself. The good you perform is repaid into your bosom. There needs not the existence of positive social laws to establish or illustrate our social responsibility. Society has done much to make us each what we are, and the influence which it has exerted is, to no small extent, but the reflex operation of our own conduct. Is not the dishonest man shunned, even though he escape a prison? Who repays the churl with love? At the best, do not the idle eat the bread of dependence, and thereby suffer degradation? And alter the 'Moral World' as you please, you can never eradicate the law of social retribution, the law by which like produces like. Succeed, if you can, in exterminating evil, you will still find the essence of responsibility remaining, in the reciprocity of good which will prevail. Responsibility

means that you shall reap as you sow, that men 'do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles.'

It is a fact, then, that we are under a social as well as an individual responsibility. I do not mean that the actual measures of social retribution are always strictly just. They are not; and from their imperfection arises the necessity of positive law. Now positive law, in theory, is the expression of the public will, the assertion and carrying out of our social responsibility, without those imperfections and failures which attend on what I may term the spontaneous influences of society. It is, so to say, a taking up of the responsibility under which we necessarily lie one to another, in order to supply its defects. Positive law creates nothing, but merely calls forth and perfects a power felt and recognised by all;—this, I mean, is the theory of all social legislation, and in this its character is the justification of its existence. And all that the Socialist can gain in the actual state of society, is to supersede one imperfect kind of responsibility to fall back upon a worse. Abolish positive law, you have not abolished the laws of your nature, you are still responsible;—and I think no man, not blinded by system, would prefer the dominion of Social anarchy to the dominion—imperfect, and in many respects blameworthy though it is—of the general will of society, expressed in written law, and enforced by reformatory sanctions. Should humanity ever reach perfection on earth, it will not need the superadded influence of legislation; but even then responsibility,—social, individual responsibility, will not have disappeared. Its influence will be altered, not its essence, being, as I have before intimated, a reciprocity of good.

Now what are the essential laws of our nature, but the voice of the universal lawgiver? They are not of our own formation. They exist as much without our act, as without our consent. His they are who established them; his who made man what he is. You are then re-

sponsible to God as well as to yourselves, and to society. It is towards the lawgiver that all responsibility finally vests. And whether you call that lawgiver God, or an unknown power, you change not the fact of your responsibility. A blind or an unjust judge is as much a judge as the wisest and most benevolent. The only difference material in the case is that on the one supposition, you feel you are in the hands of a Father; on the other, that you are enchained to dark and inexorable fate.

If, however, man is irresponsible, then all men are irresponsible, each as much and no more than the other. The drunkard, the thief, the murderer, in consequence are all free to pursue their destructive courses. Law there is none, neither written nor unwritten, neither human nor divine. If the wicked are satisfied, they are right. And if they are dissatisfied, you are not at liberty to say they are wrong. Neither do you possess any power to justify an interference. You have no right to restrain them. You have no right to consider them diseased. You have no right to apply the most gentle remedies, however efficient you may think they would prove. The villain and the tyrant are alike irresponsible with yourself; and if, contrary to their will, you lay a hand upon them, it is the hand of violence and injustice. Say your self-preservation demands their punishment, why should you be preserved and they destroyed? Say it requires their reformation; what right have you to judge for another? He is not responsible to you for his actions, or his condition. You may, indeed, choose to go against him armed with the power of society, but might is not right. He does not acknowledge your authority, and he is irresponsible. In fact, you abolish right in abolishing responsibility, for right and obligation imply each other, and the man that is irresponsible is obliged to nothing. If you possess a right, I am under an obligation; and if you set me free from all

obligation by destroying my responsibility, you can have no right even to attempt to do me good. Could you then realise your fundamental principles, the only result would be, that 'Chaos is come again,' for earth would be without law, and heaven without a lawgiver.

I am persuaded that there are, among Socialists, persons who have never seen the frightful consequences, the universal anarchy, to which their principles would lead; for, how pleasing soever it may be to some, to strip society of its power, and to disarm conscience of its sting, there doubtless are many, I would hope the great majority, who are too wise for themselves, and love their family too well, and their kind too well, to inflict on them, knowingly and deliberately, the untold and unappreciable calamities which must ensue from setting society, and especially its more abandoned members, free from all the moral obligations, restraints, and remedial influences which ensue from our responsibility to self, to the community, and to God. Reform our penal legislation if you will; mitigate, abolish our sanguinary code; obliterate the very word punishment; make the spontaneous and the positive influences of society remedial and beneficent; educate and train yourselves and your fellow-citizens till every man shall be a law to himself; establish the supremacy of conscience;—thus reform the world, and concur in accelerating the advent of the kingdom of Christ; I wish you God's speed—every true Christian and every wise and benevolent man will give you aid: but if you persevere in striving to introduce moral anarchy, and to sunder the bonds which unite the creature to the Creator, the only result you have to expect is the most steady and the most determined opposition;—and then,—alas! too late, you will discover, in the direful effects of your own actions on yourselves and your families, that you and they *are* responsible.

LECTURE VII.

It is the lot of every country which has made a forward step in civilisation, to have repeatedly undergone a prevalence of extreme opinions. More or less of social disturbance seems the indispensable price at which social progress is purchased. But the calm returns. Extreme opinions disappear. Good sense and right feeling resume their empire. Men regain their sanity, and violent agitators sink into merited oblivion. Were hey only nearly as wise as they are fierce, they might easily foresee their fate. The progress of humanity has never been by starts and sallies, but by easy gradations. Its movements ensue not from several impulses operating collectively in one direction, but from a combination of opposing forces, which direct its step in a medium course. Men of violent opinions, therefore, are sure to fail in their pernicious designs. Either human nature must change, must part with all its conservative powers, and its history take an altogether different character, or they are destined to fret their little hour on the stage, and then retire 'to dull forgetfulness a prey.'

Perhaps there never was a period in the history of our own country, when there prevailed greater or more numerous extremes of opinion than at the present day. The Reformation, the Civil Wars, the Revolution brought forth each a plentiful spawn of extravagant errors; yet must they yield the discreditable pre-eminence to our own age. Even the first principles of social, domestic, and individual life, are not only brought into debate, but vehemently denied. The reason is, we are in the midst

of a great social revolution. Old things are passing away, and society is about to appear in a renovated form. And when it has cast off the slough of ages of ignorance, it will present itself with its frame and its essential members not only uninjured, but gifted with the elements of a new and vigorous existence. Even in the very extravagance of some notions now pandering for popularity, there may be no small advantage to the cause of the true and the right. The more extreme they are, the shorter will be their feverish life. Their confutation is in their absurdity. The greater the lengths to which they go, the easier is the task which reason and the permanent instincts of our nature have to perform in dealing with them.

It will hence be gathered that I have no fear that the extravagancies of Socialism can gain a permanent footing amongst us. Their day can be but brief. Some of its disorganising doctrines have been already, and not once merely, weighed in the balance and found wanting. Christianity has survived many much more fearful attacks than Socialism has the power to make. Atheism under every possible form, and with more formidable resources, has been exploded. The community of property has been tried and condemned. Its moral fatalism the human heart has again and again rejected; and just in proportion as civilisation has made advances, has it been found that polygamy, the essence of which Owenism has revived with a change of form, has lost footing in the world. The errors which society has slain singly, can have no prospect of gaining prevalence when presented in a mass. How much soever they may thus gratify and conciliate the diseased appetite, they are only the more sure to be repudiated by that large majority whose minds and hearts are sound in the main, and who conspire to give society at once its tone and its direction.

But though the passage of Socialism on to the tomb must be sure and rapid, it may meanwhile inflict irreparable injury on some, and those, persons to whom from the infelicity of their actual condition, a moral injury is a deadly blow. Should it, for instance, tend to deepen the discontent of the discontented; to throw a veil of justification around the disposition which exists, on the part of some, to resort to the use of violence; should it render more intense and morbid the jealousies which subsist between the employer and the employed, and make still more evil the eye with which many look on property, with whose security, and on machinery, with whose unimpaired working their own welfare, and the welfare of society at large,—nor least of the working-classes,—are most intimately connected; should it remove the constraints which a regard to God and eternity cannot fail to exert, and set the wicked free from all sense of responsibility; should it sunder existing domestic ties, or widen and embitter actual domestic estrangements; should it make the father neglectful of his home-duties, while in chase after the illusions of 'community';—then, if to no others, certainly to those who come under its immediate influence, Socialism can but prove greatly and lastingly baneful. But perhaps its heaviest blow will fall on the domestic relations. They, from their very delicacy, are most susceptible of injury, as are all the finer feelings of our nature. And considering how very imperfect has been the education of the mothers and the children of the large bulk of our laboring population, I cannot fail to apprehend that Owenism has already inflicted on some families an irreparable injury. The husband who has been taught to think, as an indisputable fact, that his domestic bonds are as detrimental as they are factitious—that but for the inventions of priests and the irrational and arbitrary decrees of law, he might be as free from domestic obli-

gations as when first he looked on life with the eye of youth—is not very likely to show a kind and forbearing spirit at home; and it is well if he does not, by his bearing, make what he considers his chains, more galling to himself and more offensive to those around him. It is, therefore, with a melancholy pleasure that I offer myself as the advocate of the sanctity and perpetuity of the domestic ties, and plead against a pretended philosophy, the cause of the wives and the children of the poor.

I have hitherto made it a point to state the doctrines of Socialism in its own language,—I cannot do so in this instance. If I could bring myself to transcribe, I could not bring myself to give public utterance, to so much of what is low, offensive, not to say calumnious, as would be necessary, in order to let the system propound itself in its own words. But on this very account I shall consider the obligation more sacred to keep my representations within the actual facts. And, indeed, in relation to some of his statements, Mr. Owen may well defy exaggeration.

Our existing domestic system, then, is described as one huge mass of unqualified evil. The pure invention of priestcraft, it is sustained solely by priestcraft and the ignorance and frenzy which priestcraft has engendered. It must be destroyed, root and branch. The world is to go into 'community'; and then, butnot till then, nature is to be the sole guide and impulse in the formation of each successive connexion, the fruits of which are to be taken care of under public arrangements. The duration of the tie is to be measured by the duration of the sentiment which led to its formation. All 'single family' establishments are to be broken up, and we are to live together over the face of the land, in social families of from 500 to 2000 persons each. And this disposition is to be made in connexion with plans

which will require not more than the labor of two hours each day from persons between the ages of twenty-five to thirty;—all who have passed the latter period of life are to be free from labor, and to be occupied merely in watching over the working of the Social machinery. These families, all over the globe, will, in the second generation, all speak one language, and speedily have but one interest.

In order that those of my hearers who may not trouble themselves with this system further than the audience they give to my remarks, may have some assurance that I have not over-stated the matter, I will make one quotation, and that of a very moderate character.

'No immorality can exceed that which is sure to arise from society compelling individuals to live continually together, when they have been made, by the laws of their nature, to lose their affections for each other, and to entertain them for another object. How much dreadful misery has been inflicted upon the human race, through all past ages, from this single error! How much demoralisation! How many murders! How much secret, unspeakable suffering, especially to the female sex! How many evils are experienced over the world, at this moment, arising from this single error of the imaginary free-will system, by which men have been so long, so ignorantly and miserably governed.'*

In better days, so proverbial were 'the merry homes of England,' and so current was the acknowledgmen that 'an Englishman's home was his castle,' that our ancestors willingly perilled the comforts of those homes, their property, and their life, to preserve them untouched and unsoiled by the hand of violence; and sure do I feel that the texture of the British heart is not so changed as to give a calm entertainment to doctrines

* Owen's Lectures in Manchester, page 78.

which would raze their homes with the ground, and scatter to the winds of heaven, the sanctity, affections, and happiness which they still enshrine.

The changes which he proposes are not expected by the Social visionary himself, until his economical plans have taken effect, and moral evil is swept from the face of the earth. On this point, then, I meet him. When individuals have attained perfection, then the marriage bond is to be broken at will, and children are to be educated under public arrangements. And to any objections made to certain parts of their system, Socialists have a ready and a constant answer—'We shall reserve the practice of these principles till we are so situated, in the New Moral World, as to have a society of our own.'* I am not without my reasons for suspecting that this plea has been forced on the acceptance of Socialists. By their disorganising doctrines they have roused against them 'a power behind the throne stronger than the throne itself.' It was no pleasant prospect which was held out to the matrons and daughters of our cottages, that they should be liable to dismissal on failure of good behaviour. Even when their interests did not prompt them to opposition, their heart, their best affections rebelled against the idea, and they could not calmly anticipate the contingency of being rudely severed from those ties and endearments, which, whatever they may be to some men, are of more value than life itself to the heart of woman. Socialism, therefore, halted and loitered in its progress. It had made its appeal to all the lower feelings of humanity; but when it struck at the sanctity of domestic love, it went a step too far, and was compelled to fall back on some place of refuge. Then, in consequence, came forth the decree for delay—'Wait for some things till the world is as we

* The New Marriage System, by Robert Owen, page 13.

will make it; and then, when it and you are perfect, you may adopt the new marriage system.' In this, however, Socialism is only true to its principles, in yielding to the force of resistless 'circumstances.' One half of society arrayed against it in mild but determined hostility, and all but a fraction of the other half either indifferent or hostile, were certainly fearful odds, and might well make even a Socialist pause and re-consider his ground.

Now, in sober earnestness, what can be more purely theoretical, more visionary, more useless—to take its least fault first—than for Socialism to dream the dreams of what may be fit and right in a state of social perfection? On the surface of their case, was any thing more wild, impracticable, and impossible ever concocted? Other men have indulged in fond visions and flattering divinations; and though they constructed their imaginations merely for the amusement, the recreation, or the exercise of the minds of the more refined, they met with scarcely any other reward than the smile of ridicule. But Socialism not only surpasses all their efforts in the extravagance of its visions, but also in the audience which it seeks and partly gains. It is to the poor, the ignorant, the dissatisfied, it propounds its dark delusions. To what end? Avowedly to be realised and acted on long after the present generation shall be at sleep with their fathers! And this is the 'rational' mode of reforming the world! These 'rational' reformers are wont to treat, with no small disdain, the prospect of future reward which religion presents to its followers. 'We will make the present world happy,' is the taunt of Socialism, 'and willingly leave to the Christian the contingency of future bliss.' Now, would it not be more consistent, and quite as rational, if it would concern itself with improving the actual condition of domestic life, rather than weave the gossamer web of fancy on behalf of future generations?

But when the world has attained perfection, I see not that it will greatly matter whether its domestic system be that which now prevails or another. A perfect world will either find or make its institutions perfect. Positive law, indeed, as it implies, so is it designed and fitted for, an imperfect state of society; and those who know aught of civil history, are perfectly aware that social institutions do not lag far behind the civilisation of the day. Certainly we have no occasion to give ourselves trouble to legislate for our superiors; and if we undertake so gratuitous a task, we shall but spend our strength in vain. Institutions do not spring from mere speculations, but from experience, and a sense of want and of obvious utility; of which each age is at once the only competent judge, and the sole and supreme arbiter. When perfection comes, perfection will provide for itself; and it would be far more 'rational' for those who aspire to the character of Social reformers, to employ their whole, their undivided energy, after the example of Jesus Christ, in ministering to the actual necessities of the times in which they live.

These remarks would remain substantially correct, even if the postponement in question was not so remote as till 'the perfect day' of our social condition. 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' Study and labor to supply our present wants. There is work enough at hand to employ all your faculties; and be assured, that the only guarantee you can have of the coming of better and happier times, is in making those in which you live as good and as happy as you can. At least, if in the comprehensiveness of your mind, you must aim to benefit the future, take special care you do not employ means which will injure the present; but rather—here, too, imitating the example of 'The Great Teacher,' of him who spake as never man spake—let the principles you adopt be such as will contain the germ of present and the fruit of future good. All the divine plans for

man's improvement bear the character of a growth, not merely in being slow and gradual, but also in their power of continual developement,—first the shoot, then the ear, then the corn, and then the harvest.

Socialism, in its rationality, reverses the process, and does ill that good may come. Am I not warranted in saying so by the very fact, that it has been led to postpone, to the Greek calends, the adoption of its new domestic system? What is this postponement but either a dereliction of principle, or a confession that it is unfit and would prove detrimental in the actual condition of society? If the principles propounded are true and of universal utility, why abandon them to the mere outcry of prejudice? Is this your conduct in regard to other fundamental parts of your system? Is this conduct worthy of men who have announced themselves, in every form of emphasis, the only 'rational' members of society? If, then, after having gone so far as to declare, to teach, to publish 'the New Marriage System,' you shrink from the enforcement of it, and put off its adoption to some part of the eternity yet to come, how can we fail to infer that you have yourselves a lurking doubt of its truth and usefulness; and you can scarcely think that we go too far, if we add that you have yourselves found evil instead of good to result from your efforts in its behalf. At all events, you are convicted of having thrown before the world the details of a system, which, by your own confession, would prove injurious to society in its actual condition.

But I go farther than this. I accuse Socialism of absolute wickedness, on the ground that it has assailed our existing domestic system, without having a better capable of being immediately substituted in its place; and propounded ideas, which, while they tend to disorganise our actual institutions, cannot, by its express admission, take effect till the world has become its con-

vert, and reached the perfection which it promises. Whatever Socialism may think or do in the case, no true friend of his kind would destroy existing modes of thought and social institutions, except he had the means of replacing them by something better. The real benefactors of man have always thought it a prime duty to look at what was practicable, as well as what was desirable or contingently useful; and it is only when they have seen their way clear to the substitution of a better order of things, that they have taken means for breaking in pieces the actual institutions of society. But Socialism assaults what it is pleased to consider bad, without having a good to put in its place. It smites the wound, it professes its inability to heal.

It is, however, not only in relation to its 'New Marriage System,' but other of its essential doctrines, that Socialism requires a state of perfection, as well as an uniformity of opinion. In 'community,' it would appear, from its reasonings, there are to be no bad passsions. All will think and feel alike. The interest of each will be felt to be the interests of all, and men will be so comprehensive in their love, as to undeviatingly study and seek the general good. Fathers will not cease to love their children, but they will love their own and the offspring of others with an equal affection. And men of more active energies and superior talents, will be content to take an equal share of good, with persons whose endowments and ability bear no comparison with their own. Self is to be annihilated, universal benevolence is to take its place. No vanity, no pride, no grudging, no anger; 'community' is a 'paradise' on earth. Then, and not till then, 'The New Marriage System' is to come into operation. Youth and the first age of manhood will alone do the work which will have to be done, which in itself will be rather recreation than labor. WHEN *will*—*when* CAN

this be? You have heard of the Millenium, and Socialists have not failed to laugh its visions to scorn. By what right? Was ever enthusiasm more illusory than their own? Did ever sober philosophy array itself in colors so gaudy and evanescent? You have heard of the golden age of the heathen poets—

> 'Soon as the deathless gods were born, and man,
> A mortal race, with voice endow'd, began,
> The heavenly powers from high their work behold,
> And the first age they styled an age of gold;
> Men spent a life like gods, in Saturn's reign,
> Nor felt their mind a care, nor body pain:
> From labor free, they every sense enjoy,
> Nor could the ills of time their peace destroy;
> In banquets they delight, remov'd from care;
> Nor troublesome old age intruded there:
> They die, or rather seem to die; they seem
> From hence transported in a pleasing dream.
> The fields as yet untill'd, their fruits afford,
> And fill a sumptuous and unenvy'd board:
> Thus, crown'd with happiness their every day,
> Serene and joyful, pass'd their life away.'
>
> *Cooke's Hesiod.*

But Socialism not only promises more than this, but effects it with a less instrumentality. Its golden age is to be brought about without the aid or acknowledgment of any 'heavenly powers,' and in spite of the many direful evils with which it affirms the world is infested. And these are the fairy visions which *working men*—men of a class who are generally reputed to possess strong, if not cultivated minds—working men, who declare them and theirs the only 'rational' part of our race—hurry hither and thither in the pursuit of, like a boy eagerly chasing a butterfly; and meanwhile divert no small portion of their energies from their employments, and leave their homes unguarded, uninstructed, in the midst of what they consider 'a wicked and perverse generation.' I ask again what opinion sober common sense can entertain of the practicability of these theories?

But I will put the matter in a rather different light. And I dwell on it because it meets the enquirer at every turn in his investigation of Socialism. The whole issue, indeed, between Socialism and its opponents, depends, in no small degree, on the possibility of its visions being converted into realities. Let this bubble burst, and Socialism has vanished.

You may fairly and safely judge of the possibility of any system's being brought into operation, when you have become acquainted with the persons who undertake to give it effect. If they are true to the principles they profess, they may reap some success; but if they are unfaithful, they cannot do otherwise than fail. Principles in themselves have little power; it is in their consistent exposition and maintenance, in their practical exhibition in the life, that they gain that influence which carries them in triumph into the minds and conduct of those who are either indifferent or hostile to them. What Socialists may be in their private conduct, how far faithful or unfaithful to their professions, I am not about to enquire; but their writings are open to all, and present what, by the very fact of their being published, they themselves must consider a favourable aspect of the spirit they breathe. Now there is no one feeling which Socialists more earnestly inculcate by word than charity;—the universal prevalence of charity they predict as the inevitable result of the prevalence of their system. On this ground, therefore, they cannot refuse to be judged. Well, then, I declare, with a painful assurance that I cannot overstate the fact, that a more uncharitable spirit than their publications display was never presented to the world. Their opinions they assert as if with a sense of infallibility equal to the claim of the Pope himself. And for the opinions of others, for their practices, for their worship of God, their love of Christ, for their affection for homo, for their efforts

to do good—they have nothing but terms of condemnation. Every class of society is in the wrong, and all the more cultivated professions are filled with the cheating or the cheated, and the disciples of Christ are, with scarcely an exception, one mass of hypocrites. Socialists state their views and assail the views of others, as if their motto were,

> 'Such is my creed, and whoso likes it not,
> Is blockhead, coxcomb, puppy, fool, and sot.'

What then can be expected? If their hand is against every man, will not every man's hand be against them? And in the contest *which* will prevail,—their prediction of charity, or their practice of uncharitableness? Are persons of this spirit likely to bring peace on earth and good will among men? Are the means they employ in unsparing and general condemnation, the way to convert the world, or to establish the reign of universal love? As is the seed sown, so is the harvest. He who sows uncharitableness, will reap ill-will. At all events, whether men take the pains or not to repay Socialism in kind, it is but too obvious they cannot learn universal benevolence of those who profess it in word, but subvert it in fact. And if there is one class of men which, more than another, falls under the severity of their scourge, it is the clergy of all denominations. Are *they* likely to prefer the gadfly of Socialist intolerance, to the spirit of Him who was meek and lowly in heart? Or will any one who has felt the kindly and refining influence of the Christian temper, resign and renounce it, in order to sit at the feet of those whose tongue is full of venom? The gospels must perish, the example of Christ must prove impotent, before Socialism can prevail among men.

And therefore its prevalence is an impossibility. Socialism will have its reward in the neglect which it has earned by its fierce spirit of proscription. For a

time, and within narrow limits, it may live, supporting a precarious being, on the corruptions of our social condition; but it has not the health, soundness, and vigor, which are indispensable to a long, flourishing, and widely-spread existence.

I return, then, to its matrimonial theories; and I say that it is no less than wicked to throw notions into the very heart of society which must tend to make existing connnexions irksome; to sever existing bonds; to extinguish even the relics of domestic affection, at the very time that you have no chance whatever of realising the condition, on the realisation of which alone, you yourself declare, depends the adoption of your necessarily disorganising doctrines. This is not merely to do evil that good may come, but it is to do evil without the remotest possibility of doing good. At the very least, and on your own confession, you anticipate no good from your domestic theories till the present race of mothers have passed off the stage of life; but, in reality, you injure one generation without the possibility of benefitting the next. You upturn the foundations of domestic life, but cannot constitute it afresh; and if you did succeed in re-constructing the social frame according to your own model, and made what you term 'nature' the only impulse and guide in the formation and dissolution of domestic connexions, the sole result would be, that with a greater licence and every possible scope for the unrestrained operation of caprice and passion, you would multiply, a thousand times over, the evils which we now deplore, without securing the inestimable advantages of our actual condition. Every sensible man, therefore, would rather bear the ills he has, than fly to others that he knows not of. Upon your heads, however, will rest the serious responsibility of having aggravated, in many families, the discomforts which they have to endure; and I see not how you can plead

in extenuation, any compensating advantage of which you have put them into possession. If the heart of the husband is in any case cankered by your doctrines, and what still remains of affection towards his partner destroyed; if he has come to look on his children as a burden and an annoyance; if, in consequence, he shuns his home and seeks his pleasures—pleasures which have the zest of novelty—in other societies than the one which he is bound to tend and cherish by every manly feeling, to say nothing of higher considerations;—if she who was once the friend of his bosom, and might perhaps have remained so, or again have recovered her lost position, but for your alienating doctrines—if she has to complain of coldness and desertion; if she pines away in neglect, or but too pardonably gives loose to anger, nay, should even study revenge; if her children—still *hers*, if not his, *she* will not abandon them—should grow up in ignorance, and suffer the other inevitable and deadly consequences of their father's estrangement, and of the heartburnings and disturbance of their home:—if these lamentable evils—evils which in themselves and their results it makes one shudder and weep to think of—should in any case ensue from your teaching that the marriage tie is dissoluble at will, and the whole of our domestic arrangements a compound of folly, fraud, and calamity—then, you who have thrown out ideas which you dare not stand by, and propounded positions whose adoption you are compelled to postpone indefinitely; you, and not least he who originated the destructive theory, will be justly chargeable with this baneful invasion of the hearths of Englishmen. And should your fancied irresponsibility deaden your conscience against the contrition you ought to feel, you will not fail to reap your just recompense of reward, in the condemnation which every virtuous and right-minded head of a family will feel, if not pronounce,

against you. If any doctrines can, such as those you teach on this vitally-important topic would justify every father in denying you access within the sacred precincts of his home. And much do I misunderstand the workings of their bosoms, and the tone of feeling which they cherish and breathe, if the daughters of our British peasantry do not make you practically feel that they have no part or lot with you; nor will allow their purest and strongest affections and their fondest hopes to be trifled with, nay, to be fatally undone. Whoever broached this theory, whoever maintains it, is a stranger to the heart of woman—to the strength, depth, and enduringness of its affections—to the tenacity with which it clings to the object to which it has once given its love—to the refinement, delicacy, and sacredness which characterise the feelings of a wife and mother. Men, for aught I know, there may be, who have but transiently felt, and never encouraged, that strong and deep individual attachment which the trials and the ills of life, and the decay of bodily vigor, do but render more near, sacred, and pleasurable; but woman's heart clings to the one object round which its affections originally twined.

But I deny the assumption on which you base the necessity for the change you propose. Doubtless, indeed, many deplorable evils are connected with our present domestic system. There are many, very many unhappy homes, and to many a sin does the unhappiness give rise. But yours is not a remedy—it is an aggravation of the disorder. And you have not shown, you cannot show that existing evils are of a necessity inherent in the actual system. Remember, assertions are not proofs, nor declamatory vituperation anything better than reprehensible extravagance. He who takes the mere accidents of a system for its essential qualities, and proceeds thereupon to pour out upon it the vials

of his wrath, may mislead the unwary, but cannot fail to make the thinking smile, and the judicious grieve. Nor has he any claim to be considered an impartial or a trust-worthy judge, who has an eye and a tongue only for the faults and misdemeanors of the accused. And the very depth of the colors in which you describe our actual domestic condition, shows that if you are honest, you have never seen but the dark side of the picture. The fact, however, I take it, is, you have brooded so long and so profoundly over the dire chimeras of your beclouded fancy, that you have lost the power of seeing objects in any other hue than its. Certainly the judgment of society is against your black and revolting description. You may easily make the experiment for yourselves. Go into any one of our cottages, provided it be not already chilled and distracted by your doctrines, and simply declare to the father and the mother, one half of what you have ventured to put in print, and you will quickly be made to feel the extent of the outrage of which you have been guilty. There may not be entire concord in the house; there may even be a great falling off from the fulness of the blessing which pure, enlightened, and religious wedlock brings; there may be many a care about the means of subsistence, and but a gloomy prospect for the proper education and suitable placing out of the children—but there is love enough, and a sufficiently strong sense of domestic happiness, to cause your doctrines to be met with the scorn which they deserve, and which they cannot fail to excite in any unpoisoned mind.

I am not about to offer myself as the eulogist of the Christian homes of our land,—eulogy they need not;—but I should consider myself unworthy of the task I have undertaken, if I did not, in the actual circumstances, express the belief with which I am penetrated, that a Christian home is a truly happy spot—the safe

resting-place of the heart—the fertile soil of the highest qualities of humanity—the nurse of those sanctities of earthly and spiritual love which are our best and noblest property in this state, and the only sufficient educators for the life to come. And, in my opinion, the very essence of this priceless good consists in the inviolability of the conjugal relation. Make it terminable in this state by any thing but death or crime—abrogate the Christian law of domestic connexion—destroy its religiousness,—you, at the same time, remove its security—you do away with its sanctity—you give latitude and encouragement to temper and caprice—you allow full play for a passing misunderstanding to grow into deep alienation and perpetual enmity—you afford licence for still greater inconsideration and rashness in the formation of connexions, by the ease with which you permit them to be dissolved—you create a fearful and suspicious restlessness on the one part or the other—and you leave children a prey to all the evils which could not fail to ensue from the relaxation and fragility of the bonds by which they stand related to their parents. And then, who that knows aught of the comfort which it brings, would think of resigning the privacy of home, in exchange for a domestic condition which has not less publicity than a hamlet or a village:—500 or 2000 individuals living together under one roof and the same domestic arrangements, give one the idea rather of a regiment, a camp, a poorhouse, than that of a family. And except the perfection had been attained of which I have spoken—and the absurdity of the expectation of which is too great to require serious argument,—except perfection were attained, what, at the best, could the moral condition of such a canton be, but a scene of diversified, and, therefore, of more or less conflicting tastes, wishes, tempers, enjoyments, and pursuits? Now, when you are tired, annoyed, or harassed by the

world, by caprice or passion, by the bad dispositions or the infirmities of your associates, you have a retreat in your own home; and by your own fireside, and in the confidence of indissoluble affection, can find comfort, satisfaction, and support. Take away the privacy of our homes, you destroy their charm, you destroy their worth. Abolish the perpetuity of the matrimonial tie, you remove all ground for that entire confidence, that pleased and unquestioning trust, which, in actual circumstances, a Christian couple may, and in numberless cases do, repose in each other. As it is, every Christian home, in the degree in which it is Christian, furnishes the most rational and solid delights—the most refining and elevating influences—the best school for the cultivation of patience, forbearance, long-suffering, gentleness, truth. What more heroic, yet what so tender, as the love of a Christian mother? What more chivalrous, and what more steady, than the devotion of a Christian husband?—what dearer tie on earth, what more pure, than that which binds the Christian father with his daughter? And what so sweetens toil—what makes every needful sacrifice seem light—what brighter visions delight a father's heart—than the sight of his happy children,—their fond embrace in his *own* home—their glad welcome on his return from labor or care—their growing virtues, the promise they give of rising to useful and happy maturity? And a sacred gladness there is in the thought, which cannot even be imagined by those who would have the bond to be as frail as tow,—in the thought, that when the sight grows dim, and the ear dull, and even the grasshopper is a burden—when the sands of existence have ebbed to their last, and the parent waits for his final dismissal,—that then will the same arm which sustained her from youth, sustain the wife and mother still, and none but her own boy's

hands perform the pious office of smoothing her last pillow. Nor here is the termination of these cherished connexions. The bonds which religion has sanctified are sundered but in appearance; and father, mother, and child will resume their intercourse where affection is without alloy, and the bond of kindred minds remains unbroken. Were this even a theory and a vision, it would be not only far more acceptable to the heart, but far more useful and ennobling, than the low and disorganising theory which you expound. But as it is a hope and an assurance which Jesus has given and God ratified, and human nature welcomed and cherished, you must not be surprised if Christian families cling to it, and transmit it from fathers to sons as their best and holiest heritage.

I have too much respect for my audience, and too much respect for myself—to those feelings which this reference to the endearing bonds of Christian love has aroused—to enter into a particular examination of the distinct charges which Socialism has brought against the families of our land; nor less to undertake the express exposure of the revolting plans which it has been hardy enough to propose. There is a less displeasing, I hope as useful a course before me; and for Socialists themselves there is a more excellent way than that which they now pursue, in promulgating ideas which confessedly neither they nor theirs can carry into practice. It is simply this—make the best you can of the good which you have in possession. Consider your homes each as a little garden-plot, which it is your duty and your interest to till and make productive in the highest possible degree.

Some, perhaps, may have the reply rise in their minds, that it is a barren soil, or over-run with weeds. If it is so—why? Is no part of the evil chargeable on your own neglect? Well may the return of the husband

home be late and unwilling, if the wife is neglectful of her womanly and motherly duties; if she is uncareful to have the hearth quiet, and clean, and bright; and if, instead of offering a ready and cheerful welcome, she presents a lowering countenance, and is voluble with words of anger and reproach. Rarely, however, will she so far sink below the instincts of her nature, unless she has first been degraded by her husband. I am fully aware, and I deeply lament the fact, that the education of the females of the working classes especially, has been most defective. Still the heart of her who is a wife and mother has a fund of goodness and kindness in it, which nothing but most blameworthy conduct on the part of her husband can entirely and permanently destroy. And great as I hold the wrong to be of which, in some instances, mothers are guilty, I am of opinion that the chief cause of domestic discomfort is found on the part of the father. I wish I could induce even but one Socialist to put my opinion to the test of experiment, —harm there could not be in the trial—good, I am sure, must ensue. Let him *show* the attention and the kindness which he expects. Let him devote, steadily and in good earnest, his best efforts to the improvement of his own home, *but for one year*, and if he reap no fruit, I will then allow that the tree is barren; and time enough will it be, after the trial, to yield to his Socialist theory, and cut it down as a cumberer of the ground. But I have no fear of such a result. His efforts will be repaid, if in nothing else, yet in the love and improvement of his children, and the general increase of the comforts of his home.

There are two great leading faults which stand in the way of the course I recommend; and they attach to persons of very different characters. One plentiful source of domestic unhappiness is found in the intel-

lectual, if not moral inequality, which subsists between husband and wife. When the union first took place, they were, on the whole, nearly on a par. The husband, however, possessing strong intellectual aptitudes, pursues his own improvement and rises to the enjoyment of intellectual pleasures. Meanwhile the mother has, of necessity, among the working classes, been exclusively engaged in the absorbing duties of her household. Early and late, she has been obliged to toil, to eat the bread of carefulness, and to contrive, in every way, nor least by her own ceaseless industry and self-denial, to make her small resources meet the continually growing wants of the family. What time or energy has she had for the cultivation of her mind? What wonder if her toils, and pains, and cares, should have disturbed her temper? Thus those who were once near, are now most distant, intellectually, one from another? But is it towards a being who has thus labored and suffered, that a husband can be justified in encouraging, or even tolerating, a feeling of alienation? Is there no blame to him, that he has not striven to carry her, in some degree, along with him, in the path of self-cultivation? And can he now consider himself in the way of duty, if he does not pause, and try to make amends for past omissions? Kind, gentle, and persevering efforts can never fail. Even if they do not enlighten, they will soften and refine. Let the husband be less selfish in his pleasures, less solitary in his recreations, more alive to the claims which his partner has on his hours of relaxation, and he will soon find that no small portion of the charm will return, which brightened the days of his early and yet unsullied attachment.

A far less hopeful case is that of those who have given way to habits of intemperance. Evil, alas! is but too prolific; and when the husband has so far lost the

feelings of a man, as to allow himself in guilty pleasures, he too often meets with a terrible reward in the guilt and misery of his cottage. Yet, even in these instances —such is the essential worth of woman's heart, there are no few mothers, who only strive the more to secure the happiness of their family. Nor is there a nobler spectacle than a mother presents, who, with an abandoned husband, still struggles to keep her first love, to bear and forbear, to put the best construction and the best appearance on adverse circumstances, and to shield her children from the consequences of the father's misdeeds. Her's is the best influence, perhaps the only influence, to win him back to virtue and peace; and she has the merit of nobly performing what I recommend, and labors to make the most of the resources for happiness which lie around her.

Would that all mothers so circumstanced were endowed with similar dispositions, and dignified by similar virtues. But when the reverse is the case, still let not the husband think he has a right to complain, till he has not only reformed himself, but taken assiduous pains to blot out the consequences of his own folly. And were he in earnest in seeking his own highest good, and the highest good of those whom he is bound, by every consideration, to protect, cherish, and improve, he would act far more consistently, and far more usefully, by turning his chief attention to the cultivation of his own home, rather than pursuing the airy and vanishing castles of any Socialist or political architect. At all events, no man, whether in himself virtuous or vicious, has any right to deal severely with our present domestic arrangements, till he has put it fairly to the trial by his own conduct, whether or not it is in his power to make, even as things are, one happy home. Nor so long as he allows himself to be drawn away from his

primary duty, can he have any reason to hope that he will succeed in convincing those who themselves possess a happy home—that first of earthly blessings—that a thorough change, nay, an utter subversion, of all our ideas, plans, and hopes, is indispensably requisite. When the good, the kind, the attentive, fail to find their homes happy—when Christian principles and Christian affections are proved by fact to be powerless to impart domestic happiness—then will it be time enough for us to think of changes. But even then, nor so long as the human heart is not thoroughly corrupt, will the discreditable ideas of Socialism meet, in the bulk of society, with any other feeling than that of aversion.

LECTURE VIII.

HOWEVER grateful and salutary it may be to the Christian to dwell in contemplation on the numerous and powerful claims which Jesus Christ prefers to his love and reverence, yet he cannot but deeply regret, that after so wise and benevolent a character has been before the world for nearly two thousand years, it should still be necessary to maintain these claims in the way even of enforcement, much less of polemical proof. The necessity, however, of the task imperatively arises from the painful fact, that even in what is called a Christian country, there are very many who have scarcely any sympathies with his character, and some who are daring enough to depreciate and impeach it.

The reason of this indifference or hostility may in part be found in the dulness, and in some instances, the insensibility of the human heart to the purer and finer sentiments of religious excellence. Wherever the inferior passions of humanity have had the chief influence in the formation of the character, we can expect no other result than an inability to perceive and appreciate what is refined, exalted, and holy. Partly, however, and in no small degree, does this indifference or antipathy result from the lamentable inconsistencies, and, compared with that of their master, the low tone of morality of Christian professors themselves. The judgments of most men are superficial; and when a mind which circumstances have inclined to unbelief, adverts to the lives of those who call themselves the disciples of Christ, and finds them, in many cases, but little superior to the lives of others, in some instances even worse, it but too easily contracts a general feeling of aversion which prompts it to disallow religion altogether, and to brand it as a

cunningly-devised fable. The impropriety of so rash and sweeping a conclusion, has been again and again successfully exposed. Still, however, is the influence not only tolerated but fostered. But there is a mode of argument, which, in most cases, would prove effectual—a mode difficult, indeed, of adoption, yet possessing imperative claims on every one who would see the spirit of Jesus welcomed and honored in the hearts and lives of those who now disown him. Let Christians be Christians indeed, let them be faithful to their trust and their principles; let them be noticeable for the gentleness, meekness, and active benevolence of their characters; thus, let Christ, instead of being crucified afresh, be continually exhibited and silently preached to the world, and the result would be the speedy subjugation of all the strongholds of actual infidelity, and men would be even unconsciously won to the truth and spirit of gospel purity. And why, my Christian brother, do you think that the evils of scepticism are permitted, but to arouse the Christian world to a sense of their duty, to make them aware of the value of their principles, and true to the requirements which they impose. It is comparatively of little use that we profess and inculcate, except we practise, the wide, tender, and self-denying benevolence of Christ. One act of pure philanthropy will be of more avail than any exposition whatever of the claims of Christ to love and reverence. And you, I have no doubt, feel with me, when you survey the actual condition of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, that the Christian church, in general, has not proved faithful to the mission with which it is entrusted; and when you come to learn that the baneful system, which in these lectures I have been occupied in confuting, finds the chief basis of its support in social evils, whose existence cannot be denied, and ought not to be palliated, you will also feel that the lesson which we should find in these unhappy circumstances, is to apply our own energies with steady and devoted perseverance to

the performance of our Christian duties, in judicious endeavours to enlighten and inform the ignorant, the erring, and the vicious.

It must, however, be also admitted, that the anti-Christian spirit of which I have spoken, owes much of its prevalence to the circumstance, that it is not a mere vague admission to the claims of Jesus that is required, but the surrender of the heart. It might at first sight appear strange, that the excellence of Jesus should require proof and enforcement, any more than the virtues of Titus or Howard. But remember, the latter may be allowed, without any corresponding change of character. The state of mind which such an allowance requires, is a mere assent, a yielding of the intellect to an historical fact. But such an admission is morally inoperative, and will not satisfy the demands of religion. The great aim of Jesus was to renew the human soul: and therefore his character, which is the great means to that great end, must be transfused into our own. It is by no means enough to call him, 'Lord, Lord,' we must also do the things which he commanded. It is the possession of his spirit which constitutes the true, the only sufficient test of discipleship. This is the work, this the labor, and this also the difficulty. An historical faith is, in regard to the great work of religion, no faith at all. It is only the first step towards the temple of Christ, to acknowledge that he was an eminently good and pious man;—a step not, indeed, to be despised, but of value, chiefly, so far as it leads the disciple into the holy of holies of the Christian life. There is, therefore, a vast difference between the admission of the virtues of others, and the felt and practical acknowledgment of the claims of Jesus to love and reverence. The first is easy, the second is the labor of a life. Multitudes may yield the first, who, in their actual condition, are wholly incapable of the second. And a feeling of their inability, perhaps an unrecognised, if not unconscious feeling of their inability, may but too readily lead them to the

entire renunciation of religion. But the human heart is prone to self-justification, and he who has gone so far as to disown, is easily prompted to depreciate Christ. There is but one step, frequently, from denial to vituperation. If, however, by any legitimate means within our power, we can reverse the process; if we can turn but one person out of the broad way, which leadeth to destruction, and set him on the narrow road which leadeth unto life; if we can induce the unbeliever to admit the pre-eminent excellence, the claims to love and reverence of Jesus Christ, we are under the most sacred obligations to employ our ability; and although we may not thus make him a Christian—that must be his own work—yet it is something to have turned his face toward Zion, and to have planted in his mind an acknowledgment of the worth of the character of our Lord. That acknowledgment, once there, may, under the blessing of our heavenly Father, work and operate in secrecy, till it has made its possessor a child of God and an heir of eternal life. It is under this conviction that I now ask attention to the subject of the claims of Jesus to love and reverence; and shall, in my concluding lecture, address myself to a consideration of the beneficial influence which Christianity has actually exerted on the world. For both topics I am deeply penetrated with a sense of my insufficiency; but I have no alternative, for I should think I had left undone the better half of my duty, did I not, while I expose error, do what in me lies to expound truth, and to offer to the misguided, the option of something less chimerical and more beneficial than the system they uphold, and the illusions of which they are in pursuit.

It may not, impossibly, prepare the way for the more direct exposition of some of the claims of Jesus Christ to love and reverence, if I first show that avowed Christians are not alone in the opinion which they entertain of the excellence of his character. There are admissions on the part of the enemies of his religion which go to a

considerable length, and from which, with no great expenditure of time or argument, we may evince the necessity of other admissions which would lead to the recognition of him as the Christ of God. I could easily adduce the testimony of men of his own day, who did not enter his fold, the direct and the indirect evidence of the common people and the authorities of the land of Judæa. I could summon before you, as witnesses in my case, some of the bitterest enemies whom Christianity had to withstand in the early periods of its history. I could cite the spontaneous declarations of many modern unbelievers; but the full presentation of this evidence would detain me too long away from the great merits of the case. Let it, therefore, suffice to name Lucian, Chubb, Rousseau, Paine, and Shelley,* as persons who have more or less distinctly concurred, not only with Pilate, 'I find no fault with this man,' but also with the centurion at the cross, 'Verily, this was a righteous man;' while in addition to these more commonly known authorities, I adduce one or two, at once sufficient in themselves, and probably not so easy of access. *Lequinio* speaks of Jesus as 'one who was actuated by the most sincere good-will to all the human race, teaching the great principles of moral equity and the purest patriotism; braving all dangers, opposing the great, despising alike glory and fortune, equally temperate with respect to himself, beneficent to others, and sympathising with all; hated by the powerful whom he provoked, persecuted by the intriguing, whose artifices he exposed, and put to death by a blind and deceived multitude, for whom he had always lived. This generous philanthropist, (he concludes,) who wholly sacrificed himself to the public good, who gave his whole existence to the unhappy and even to his persecutors, never lied but to teach virtue.'† The authorities who presided over the compilation and the issue of the French *Encyclopédie*, which has been termed 'the

* See 'Christianity Unassailable,' by J. R. Beard, pp. 123, 134, &c.
† Préjugés Detruits.

Bible of infidelity,' will not be suspected of any undue bias in favour of Christianity; the ensuing passage, however, I find in the work under the article '*Christ*:'—'The legislator of the Christians, animated by a spirit far different from that of all the legislators of whom I have spoken, began by destroying the errors which tyrannously ruled the world, in order to render his religion more useful. In giving to it for its primary object the happiness of another life, he wished also that it should be the cause of our happiness in this. On the ruin of idols, whose superstitious worship entailed a thousand disorders, he founded Christianity, which adores, in spirit and in truth, one sole God, the just remunerator of virtue. He established, in its primitive splendor, the law of nature, which the passions had obscured; he revealed to men a morality till then unknown in other religions; he engraved on the human spirit that deep humility which destroys and annihilates all the resources of self-love, by pursuing it into the most hidden folds of the soul; he did not enclose the pardon of injuries in a stoical indifference, which is only a proud contempt of the person who has inflicted them, but he carried it out even to the love of our most cruel enemies; he placed continence under the guard of the most austere chastity, in obliging it to keep even the eye under restraint; he ordered us to ally modesty with the rarest talents; he repressed crime by a judicious severity over even the thoughts, in order to prevent it from manifesting itself in the outward life; he brought back marriage to its primitive institution, in forbidding polygamy; he had in view the eternity of that sacred bond, in proscribing repudiation.'

I have collected the following testimony from the writings of Voltaire:—'We reverence in him an Israelitish theist, as we praise Socrates, who was an Athenian theist. If you take away from the gospels all that is foreign to Jesus, all that has at different times been ascribed to him in the midst of the most scandalous

disputes, and of councils which anathematised each other, what remains? A worshipper of God who taught virtue, an enemy of the Pharisees, a just man, a theist, whose religion embraces all the universe at all times, and which, consequently, is the only true one.'*

'He instituted neither cardinals, nor pope, nor inquisitors; he had no one burnt; he enjoined only the observance of the law, the love of God and one's neighbour.'†

'Jesus was not a superstitious person; he was not intolerant; he had intercourse with the Samaritans. Let us imitate his indulgence, and deserve to have indulgence showed to us.'‡

'Jesus adored one God, and we adore him. He despised vain ceremonies, and we despise them.'§

'You know better than I, what a fatal contrast every age has seen, between the humility of Jesus and the pride of those who have adorned themselves with his name; between their avarice and his poverty, between their debauchery and his chastity, between his meekness and their sanguinary tyranny.' 'Of all the speeches of Jesus, I avow, that nothing has made more impression on me, than what he replied to those who had the brutality to strike him before he was conducted to death. "If I have said evil, bear witness of the evil, and if I have said well, why strike ye me?" This is the reply which should have been made to all persecutors.'‖

'Jesus was persecuted; whoever shall think as he, will be persecuted as he. He was a good man, who, born in poverty, spoke to the poor against the superstition of the rich Pharisees and insolent priests.'¶

'Jesus was more than a Jew, he was a man; he embraced all the world in his charity. Look at the

* *Profession du foi des Theistes.*
† *Sermon du Rabbin Akab.*
‡ *Homilie sur la Superstition.*
§ *Homilie sur l' interpretation du Nouveau Testament.*
‖ *Idem.*
¶ *Idem.*

beautiful parable of the good Samaritan. This is the doctrine, this the morality, this the religion of Jesus.'*

Let us sum up the qualities which are here attested by the unwilling voice of unbelief. According to the attestation, Jesus was a generous philanthropist, a distinguished moralist, a self-devoting reformer, a pure patriot; an enemy only of error, hypocrisy, fraud, superstition, priestcraft; he taught the worship of one God, and the love of humanity; he practised justice, tolerance, general benevolence, humility, forbearance; he meekly endured poverty, persecution, and death, in his righteous efforts to enlighten and improve his fellow-countrymen.

Now, if this testimony of unbelief is worthy of trust, I cannot see how the claims of Jesus to love and reverence can be denied. Go over the import of these passages in your minds, and ask yourselves whether he of whom this is true—he who thus taught, lived, and died—does not deserve to be ranked among the best benefactors of mankind, and is not worthy to have his memory enshrined in the heart of every good and benevolent man. Say nothing of his purely religious character, put it for a moment out of your thoughts, and then tell me if his mere earthly virtues are not such as to merit and excite your warm and affectionate admiration. Admit this—as admit it you must, or deny the credibility of history—and then how can you stop here?—how can you refuse to go forward to the admission of his claim to a divine mission? But this claim, I presume, is the lie of which *Lequinio* speaks, when he says that Jesus 'never lied except to teach virtue.' What a monstrous assertion is this! What a striking and painful evidence have we here of the force of prejudice—of the perverting influence of a foregone conclusion—of the depravating power of a spirit of scepticism! Who but one in whose mind the distinction between right and

* *Homilie du Pasteur Bourn.*

wrong had been in some way darkened and defaced, could have in the same breath proclaimed the excellence of the person to whom he broadly imputes the debasing practice of falsehood? In reality, however, some such vain imagination as this possesses the mind of most unbelievers, who, at the same time that they admit the virtue of our Lord's character, are prevented from becoming his docile disciples by the idea, that so far as his religion was concerned, Jesus practised an imposition. Were this, however, the fact, the features of truth, honesty, and sincerity of which they speak, could not have stood out, as they now do, in bold relief—could not have been exhibited, in the utmost consistency and without one single exception, in circumstances the most diverse, in junctures the most perilous, and amid desertion, treachery, ignominy, and death. Nor is it possible to suppose that Jesus would have possessed the moral courage, the unquailing and unvarying strength of character, which carried him through the very incidents, from his bearing in which the existence of his admitted virtues is deduced, and led him, in a high moral triumph, through the long and bitter train of sufferings which injustice, brute force, and prostituted legal authority inflicted on him. The practice of deception leaves consequences in the heart and life, too many and too obvious to escape the eye. And especially in the hour of trial and endurance—when life is at stake, or may be purchased by confession—can it be easy to avoid the betrayal of some symptoms of the baseness of the heart, if only in hesitation as to your course, and a momentary quailing before the just avengers of your crime. In a crisis, however, not less severe than this, Jesus remained true to himself, true to his professions, nay, practised, if even he did not exceed, the very patience, equanimity, gentleness, and placability which he had inculcated in the calmer moments of his life. I see not, for myself, how the conclusion can be resisted, that, as he was faithful unto death, even the death of the cross, so was he pre-

eminently, and in every particular, an honest and a righteous man, true in thought and feeling as well as in action. If so, then he neither asserted without reason, nor believed without sufficient evidence, that he came from God. This inference you must make, or allow that of all impostors he was the greatest, for who like him ever inculcated the virtue of sincerity?—who was ever more severe in the denunciation of hypocrisy?—who ever laid an equally distinct and an equally high claim to the special favor, presence, and aid of the Deity? And who, with any approach to his practice, had the name of the God of truth so constantly on his lips, or professed so habitually to be entrusted with his delegated power? It is the idlest inconsistency to admit the excellence of Christ at the very time you charge him with falsehood; and to my mind, the inconsistency is scarcely less, if, in conjunction with that admission, you deny his claims to a divine commission, and to supernatural aid. The features which constitute his character—the incidents whence those features are deduced, or in which they are plainly exhibited—are all so intimately blended with the train of miraculous operation through which he went, as to admit of no severance the one from the other,—as they exist, so must they stand or fall together. You may as well think of removing the warp from the woof without destroying the cloth, or of resolving water into its constituent gases, and yet preserve its essential qualities, as of separating the supernatural from the natural in the history of Christ, so as to leave his mere human character in possession of its acknowledged virtues. I would, then, that the unbeliever should be consistent;—let him either deny the existence or disown the excellencies of our Lord; or if the hardihood of this invasion of history is too great for him, then, in admitting the virtues of Jesus, let him not think of rejecting the divinity of his mission. The authority which assures us he was holy, harmless, and undefiled, assures also, not merely in word but in fact,

but in implications which are stronger than assertions, but in incidents that are inwoven with the very texture of his history, that he was sent of God.

We will not, however, rest satisfied with the direct admissions of unbelievers. Jesus has left a memorial of himself in the mind of the world. You want to know what Christ was; look around, look within. His image, marred it may be, but not robbed of its essential features, exists in the apprehensions of all civilised nations. It is so, more or less, in the case of all the distinguished men of former days—only, that the throne of the image of Christ is the heart of humanity, while others have impressed an idea of themselves but on one or more of its portions. When you think of Cæsar, the thought of a distinguished warrior arises in your mind. Demosthenes is, with you, the model of perfect eloquence. 'What think ye of Christ?' What image of himself has he left graven on the tablets of men's minds? Is it not the image of perfect goodness, tender benevolence, heroic self-devotion, gentleness and truth? Take a little child whose acquaintance with Jesus has been solely in the narratives of the Gospel histories; no infusion of the prejudices of the world, no indoctrinating with the chaff of human opinions;—what is its idea of Christ? A conception of a loving, kind-hearted, and suffering son of man. This idea of Jesus is universal; whatever opinions may be entertained of his nature, of his mission, of his sacrifice, of the extent of his mediatorial influence,—amid all the varieties of belief on these and other points, the one central conception, *the idea* of Jesus—that idea which is never lost, with whatever 'hay, straw, and stubble' it may be mixed and obscured—*the idea* of Jesus is that of the man of sorrows, and the friend of humanity. And is not such an idea worthy to be entertained in every breast with love and reverence? Were it *but* an idea—could we not trace up the conception to its original—what good man, what father of a family, what philanthropist would wish to obliterate it? But

whence the idea? A portrait points to a living subject. A conception we first analyse into its elements, and then seek their origin. Whence, then, the idea of Christ? An origin it must have had. Say that our accounts are not true;—what do you gain by the denial? The idea is in the world, cannot be erased, and must be accounted for. If it be an invention, he who invented it must have felt the qualities which he put together with a truth to nature never surpassed. He, therefore, was the Christ. He drew his own portrait, and proved himself thereby one of the greatest benefactors of his race. The notion of a mere invention, of a pure fabrication, will not for a moment be entertained by a competent judge. The image of Jesus is obviously from the life. A life like his, then, there once must have been; and you do but raise a passing cloud, when you affirm that the gospel histories do not assign the true origin of the idea of Jesus Christ. Or should you resort to the most improbable of all suppositions, that this idea is the work not of one mind but of many—the complex conception of perfect excellence, of which the outline was sketched by one artist of old, and which a thousand hands had since concurred to work into its actual beauty and sublimity,—should you advance this position, who that knows any thing of the history of man, or the mode in which a moral portrait—one true in every feature to nature—is executed, who would believe you? However this may be, still you have not got rid of the image itself. The name 'Jesus' remains as the representative of the purest piety to God, and the most generous love to man; and prefers a claim which I should think would be irresistible to your love and reverence. The greatest obligation which we owe to the past, is in the treasury of sublime thoughts, generous impulses, and pure affections which we have received from it. This is the best, as it is the great heritage of humanity. Among these, why single out the idea of Christ for reprobation and proscription? Who would be so infatuated, that knew

wherein lie the highest interests of his race, his family, and himself? Would you strip the earth of the lovely associations with which many of its spots are covered? Would you lose the pleasing memories of your boyish days, and the haunts of your childhood? Would you be content to part with the feelings which make your country dear to you? Would there be any good in the ability to look on the heavens and the regions of boundless space with the bare and dreary eye of a heartless science? Even the severest astronomer has his poetry, otherwise he would never have earned his distinction. But none of these losses would prove so great, so detrimental, so withering, as the loss of the sense of moral beauty. The great Bacon has somewhere said, that he would rather believe all the fables of antiquity, than hold that the universe was without a creating and presiding mind. It is the remark of one who had sounded the depths of the human heart, knew what were its wants, and what its best instructors and guides. And so will every one say who is not dead to the value of ideas of moral grandeur;—'I would rather part with every grateful association I have with midnight or midday, the morning and the eventide, with hill and forest and vale, with the ocean and the streamlet, than lose from my mind one feature of that excellence and perfection of character which I connect with the idea of Jesus Christ.' A circumstance is on record which will serve to show how deep a feeling of reverence is associated with the idea of our Lord, even by persons who would prefer the distinctions which literature confers to the honour of being called by the name of Christ. A company of eminent authors of the last generation were discoursing with each other on the personages whom they would wish to have seen, when one of them, with a suffused eye and quivering lip, stammered out a reference to a name which he could not utter, and said—'If Shakspeare were to come into the room, we should all rise to meet

him; but if *that person* were to come into it, we should all fall down, and try to kiss the hem of his garment.'*

For the elements of which the general idea of Jesus consists, I have appealed to the general apprehensions of civilised society; I might appeal, not without some success, to the minds of Socialists themselves. Labour as they may have done to put away the conception, they still retain fragments of it enough to show how morally sublime the image itself is. Whence do they borrow the terms which, of all others, they judge most competent to express their sense of the worth of their system, and of its originator? The Christian cannot do otherwise than feel that these terms are desecrated by their application; but forgetting this evil for a moment, he will find that the enemies of Christ are of a necessity, however unthinkingly, compelled to admit in fact, the peerless excellence of Jesus Christ: thus Mr. Owen, in a spirit of adulation which savours little of rationality, is designated 'the Social Saviour,' 'the true Saviour of man,' and community is 'a paradise.' Why is the term 'Saviour' thus employed, but because it stands for what is highest and best in human character? No word brings with it associations so comprehensive, so inviting, so endearing; and on this account it is abused by this gross misapplication. And what, too, is there but a tacit admission of the superiority of the morality of Christ, in the charge of hypocrisy which Socialists are wont to level against all his followers? It will not be pretended that, taking Christians as a whole, they are worse than other men; worse citizens—worse fathers—worse children. But Socialism judges them by their own standard; that is high;—they do not excel their fellow-men, therefore they are hypocrites. The implication that the Christian standard of morality is high, is thus inevitable. But that standard, so far as

* Hazlitt's Literary Remains, vol. 2., p. 357.

it is correct, is only the complex idea of the character of Christ. You thus admit its superiority; you are found confessing the excellence of Christ. Would that you would yield your hearts to its influence,—that you would cherish the love and reverence which the idea of him justly claims.

But, for a moment, go with me in thought to the land of Judæa, and contemplate the character of Jesus Christ. What do you see? You are in the midst of a narrow-minded, intolerant, and bigoted people,—a people whose national wickedness had gone up to heaven as a memorial against them, and who are enslaved to worn-out modes of thought, to effete institutions, and to a foreign and a galling yoke. On the banks of a petty lake, in a despised part of this unsocial and narrow tract of country, a voice of the tenderest benignity and the most comprehensive benevolence makes itself heard. It is the voice of a carpenter's son—of a man of immature years, who has enjoyed none of the advantages of a superior education, and to whom the civilisation of Greece and Rome, the wisdom of its sages, the eloquence of its orators, the imaginings of its poets, are as if they were not. Cut off by the accidents of birth and training from the philosophy of his own, or of previous ages,—cut off by the same circumstances from the higher civilisation, such as it was, of his own country, with none of the advantages of family or station, he utters words, which, in a few centuries, give law to the human mind in its then highest condition, and which still exert a supremacy over the most cultivated nations of the earth, and are most prized and cherished by those individuals among them who have reached the highest style of man. How is this? Perhaps he has spent the morning and the meridian of his days in profound meditation. That would not be an explanation. But the probability is, that he himself had pursued one of the lowliest handicrafts. Can you—I cannot—

account for this unquestionable fact on any mere earthly grounds? Perhaps he spends a long life in attaining the perfection of his public character? That is no explanation. But he survived, at the longest, not more than to the end of the third year of his ministry; and his morality is as pure and wide, his spirit as gentle, forbearing, and affectionate when he first opens his commission, as when he ends it on Calvary. Perhaps he conciliates the favour and secures the aid of the wise, the good, the great of the land. That is no explanation. But his associates are simple-minded, ignorant, and prejudiced fishers; and with a boldness and an authority which are inexplicable by any ordinary considerations, he sets his face against the Pharisee, the Sadducee, the Essene, the Priest, and the heathen conqueror. They all, each in his own way, act as his enemies, not his friends; for he had put their craft in peril; he had assailed the prejudices and smote the ignorance and denounced the wickedness on which they severally subsisted. His death they therefore compass; and in the destitute state in which he was, so far as earthly power is concerned, by what means, if God were not with him, did he preserve his life and prolong his ministry to the brief period to which it extended? The common people, indeed, heard him gladly, but with a fickleness and impetuosity for which, in all ages, they have been but too remarkable, they more than once put even his life in jeopardy, and at last swelled the insane cry, 'Crucify him! crucify him!' Nay, when he in whom was vested the supreme power of life and death, made an effort to save Jesus from the fury of the rabble, declaring, 'I have found no fault in him; I am innocent of the blood of this just man;'—their only answer was, 'his blood be on us and on our children.' Their cry prevailed;—Jesus is nailed to the cross. And there, after enduring excruciating pains, how does he repay his enemies? how does he repay the self-convicted im-

becility of the Roman governor—the indignities of the judgment-hall—the mockings of the soldiers—the taunts of the passing spectator, the scornful derision of the priests and rulers? 'Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!' In this spirit did he die the death of a slave. Thus did his embittered foes consummate their fell design.

Yet what evil had he done? Enter into the details of his history. Some of its particulars stand out too prominently to be over-looked, and bear too deeply the impress of eternal truth to be suspected. Towards this same people, who preferred the life of a robber to his, what had been his conduct? When he saw the multitudes scattered as sheep having no shepherd, he had compassion on them, and taught them many things. Towards his own immediate disciples who, in the hour of darkness, all forsook him and fled, what had been his conduct? He strove to enlighten their darkness, to convey to them a just idea of the spirituality of his kingdom, to invest them with the most honourable function on earth, that of teachers of truth, duty, and benevolence. He bore with their waywardness, softened down their mutual jealousies, promised them a full reward for the sacrifices they had made, and actually gave them—had they known the things which belonged to their peace—the highest reward they could receive, in admission to his own presence—to the sight and benign influence of his example; and with what tender regard he held them in his heart, the concluding hours of his life, as set forth by him who lay in his bosom, and who caught most of his spirit, manifested in the most marked and interesting manner. Then observe the kind embrace with which he welcomed the little children into his presence—the little children whose mothers, with true maternal feeling, —affording the purest evidence of human nature to his claims to love and reverence—eagerly pressed forward through the surrounding crowd; and whom his uncon-

genial disciples—presenting an equally true sample of a nature which, in being alien to it, disowns the worth of Christ—had endeavoured to thrust away. And why do the people from all quarters of the land bring the sick and the infirm, to lay them at his feet? Why do the diseased themselves totter onwards, and imploringly ask his aid? Why does even heathenism, in the person of the Roman centurion, beseech the exertion of his power on behalf of a slave? Some report of him must have gone throughout the country, and the condition of the applicants shows the benign character of his ministry. I am not now affirming that his ability to heal was of a miraculous kind. I adduce these instances to exemplify the idea of him which Judæa had formed—formed within the space of a few brief months; and at least you must acknowledge that it was that of no insignificant character, the good and generous physician. But this is not all. It is not credible that this movement of the maimed, the halt, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the insane, and those nigh unto death, could have taken place, had there not been some sufficient ground for the general impression; and the nature of most of the cures forbids any other supposition than that of divine aid and co-operation.

I will ask you also to enter with him into the privacies of the domestic circle—to mark the deep reverence and confiding affection which the family of Lazarus entertained towards him. Here he appears in the light of a gentle and tender friend. More;—why, when Lazarus was sick, did his sisters send for Jesus? The hour when a beloved brother was on the point of death, was not the time when the heart of a woman could play a part. Yet when he comes near the house, with how entire a trust do they hasten to meet him, and with what undoubting assurance do they express their faith in his power, and implore its exertion, to restore the deceased to life! Go with him and them to the tomb where he

lay, and witness the agony of his spirit at the departure of his friend, and the grief of his loving and bereaved sisters. You may—if such be the perversity of your wills—call this fiction; but, then, never did fiction so wear the garb of truth and nature, and never did friendship appear in so attractive a form. And this I must add, that if, after all, the family of Lazarus knew not Jesus, knew not what were the features of his heart, and what the powers with which he was entrusted of God—if this chapter out of private life is but a delusion, or a base fabrication, we have no criterion by which to distinguish the morally true from the morally false, nor to determine what those qualities are which have a legitimate claim on the love and reverence of man.

It was with him—it could not fail to be, a painful consciousness, that the great work he came to effect could not gain a footing in the world—such was the wickedness and perversity of the age—without being the indirect cause of bringing heavy calamities on the land of his birth. He foresaw, in but too distinct outline, the gathering storm which, in a few years, was to desolate the land, and make its inhabitants cry out to the hills, 'fall on us,' and to the rocks, 'cover us.' This he foresaw—with the hard heart and unmoistened eye of our social reformers? With overflowings of the softest pity. These are his words—when in the midst of severest trial the only eyes that shed a tear over him were 'a great company of women,' women ever true to their nature, and in this case affording no unworthy proof of the claims of Jesus to love and reverence—these were his words—and surely the eloquence of thought and of feeling were never more happily blended—'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children; for, behold, the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.' And it was immediately

after he had given utterance to the awful language in which he condemned, with but too merited condemnation, the wickedness in high places by which the ruin of his country had been brought about, that his soul, melting into its customary tenderness, prompted the bitter lamentation of wounded patriotism and afflicted benevolence;—'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!' Now one of these sayings—there are many others—would have preserved in grateful and deathless recollection the memory of any heathen sage; and from the mere man of literature, from the lover of the sublime in thought, the tender and the natural in feeling, the lover of simple, chastened diction, from any one having a head to think and a heart to feel, it could not fail to conciliate respectful and affectionate regard;—but to him who follows these outpourings of eloquence to the sentiments whence they sprung, and especially to the Christian, who feels that even they are a manifestation of but a part of the divine emotions of his Saviour, of that love which led him to lay down his life for the world, they prefer a claim which can no more be disowned than the claim of a mother to her infant's love, for some return of gratitude, affection, and reverence.

But instead of following out the more congenial train of remark on which I have now fallen, it may be more serviceable to beg your attention, for a moment, to the patriotic sentiments which Jesus evinced, not only in the last period, but through the whole of his public life. You have a stern dislike of priests, and hence—for one reason—you are led to reject Christianity. Even patrio-

tism has appeared before you in so spurious a shape, that you have learned to feel discomplacent at the word. But form to yourself a correct idea of the relation which Jesus bore to his age and nation, and thereby—in no small degree—to the world at large. He was not a priest. His followers were not priests. He presented the rare, the solitary spectacle of a patriot without guile or error. Jesus was not a friend of existing abuses, nor a palliator of existing injustice, nor a panderer to vulgar errors, nor a seeker of his own fortune in the ignorance and vice of others. He was the great moral reformer of his times, the teacher and friend of the people, the enemy of priestcraft, and every form of spiritual and social corruption. And he paid his life a penalty for the faithfulness with which he executed his arduous office. As he came to bear witness to the truth, and as he could not otherwise have finished his work, so he spared no errors, however honored by time, however hedged round by prejudice or shielded by power;—so also he spared no guilt, under whatever venerable forms it hid itself, or by whatever fearful array it rose in opposition against him. You never find him conciliating error in one rank, in order to gain power for attacking error in another rank; and above all, you never find him turning to his own defence, much less to his own aggrandisement, any one of the currents of social influence of the nation. God and humanity, truth and duty, were the ideas which swayed his soul, made him nobly forgetful of himself, and ever intent on the full execution of his most heroic task. And yet, there is no assailing on his part of existing institutions. He himself frequented the temple, whose overthrow he foresaw and predicted. In fact, his methods of reform were, of all others, most effectual. He poured a stream of new ideas into the mind of the nation; he awakened and braced their love of truth; he promulgated great and

everlasting principles touching man's highest nature and highest interests; he kindled into vivid existence new and most powerful sympathies,—and then dying, left the result to time and Providence, in the assurance that when the leaven had worked its work, the needful changes would ensue, and that though, in their first operation, these influences would bring sorrow on many, yet would they also re-create the moral life of many more, and eventually prove the regeneration of society, and the salvation of the world. I know not how such a course of conduct may strike your minds, but certainly to me it appears the height of wisdom and the height of benevolence; and until I have found another social reformer who, without special aid, has manifested these qualities in an equal degree, I must be allowed to think that in Jesus these are tokens of the finger of God; nor even then, however great and good the instance may be, shall I think that Jesus has a less claim to the love and reverence of humanity.

Could I, however, induce you to lay aside the prejudices by which, as I fear, your understandings are darkened, and the natural workings of your heart diseased;—would you but welcome and detain the seasons of sober thought, and calm down your breasts from the agitations which existing social evils, and the reveries of system, have aroused and still 'sustain; would you take council of your better nature and follow its impulses, I should not despair of convincing you that Jesus has still higher claims than these to your reverential affection. Have you no wants which Socialism,—which no mere system of philosophy—cannot supply? Is it satisfactory to your heart to believe that the universe is without an intelligent Creator—society without a Providence—evil without any but a mortal remedy—and death without an issue or a meaning? Were such the gloomy ideas which crowded on your mind when 'life, as opening buds, was

sweet' ?—when fond and grateful hopes broke forth from your youthful, and yet untarnished heart? Did you lay your mother or your first-born in the tomb, contented with the idea of their sleeping an eternal sleep? Was there not a period in your wedded love when a sacredness attached to the ideas and anticipations which it kindled in your minds? Can you now calmly look on the eye that beams forth affection on yours, and calmly think of the kind heart that throbs more quickly at your approach, and meanwhile reflect that they are but animated clay, and will soon pass from your hearth and your bosom into dreary and everlasting night? Can you look forward to your own departure out of life, and think of the weeping hearts that will stand around your bed, and of the dark, not to say perilous, venture you are about to make into the mysterious abyss of eternity, and yet feel no shrinking of soul under a system which is without hope and without God;—which, in relation to the wants of our higher nature, is as chilling to the heart, as it is barren to the mind? And has no misgiving ever crossed your bosom of your own self-sufficiency; no sense of need for higher and better guidance, than a mind can give which is often dizzy when it is not dark, and a heart whose infirmities the wise feel and lament every day they live? And then if the cause of the universe is Intelligence, and man, therefore, is held answerable to his Maker, can you reflect on the past without a conviction of sin, or look to the future without desiring a hope of pardon? Think not that these things are the imbecilities of the weak, or the inventions of the fraudulent. The highest natures that have adorned humanity, have experienced the feelings and gladly cast themselves on the guidance and refuge offered by Christ. And would you but use the power you undoubtedly possess, whatever your system may assert to the contrary, and leaving on one side all the traditions of men,

place yourself without pride of heart, place yourself as a little child at the feet of Jesus, you would ere long experience for yourself somewhat of that high, that priceless good, which makes him the Saviour of all who learn of him and breathe his spirit. The elements of a new life would begin to arise in your bosom. New emotions—emotions, as useful as they are benign and grateful, would be awakened; new principles would come into being and gather strength—thence a new power, new hopes, and a brighter and a happier destiny. The moral world would no longer be without a sun. Eternity would cease to be a blank and a dreary void. The pall which darkens over your domestic affections would pass away. And alike for the friend of your bosom, your departed sires, and your cherished, guileless, and happy children, for yourself and your kind, you would have a prospect fraught with eternal good: you would entertain a hope that, in the darkest passage of their life they were under the eye of omnipotent love, and would be wisely and gently conducted through the transient scenes of this feverish state of trial, into 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'

And this hope you may lay hold of without the surrender of one manly feeling,—without bowing the knee to priestcraft, or bending the neck to the yoke of creeds. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' You need only to yield your heart to the wisest, the gentlest, the most disinterested of teachers, and you will find your wants satisfied, your mind expanded and invigorated, and your breast filled with the moral harmonies of earth and heaven. To whom, then, 'will you go but unto Christ, for he hath the words of eternal life?' Can you be content to turn away from him; to a teacher and a system, the very utmost of whose profession is, to make you 'the chief of animals'?

LECTURE IX.

I AM not surprised that Owenism should have set itself in determined hostility to the Christian religion. If that is true, if there is truth in its fundamental principles,—if, as it teaches, there is a primary Intelligence; if that Intelligence is the Father and Guardian of the universe; if Jesus Christ came from him on a message of mercy and love to man; if man is held responsible for his actions as having power to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before his Maker; if the more intimate relations of domestic life are founded on divine ordinations, and partake of the perpetuity of that state for which they were mainly designed to prepare man; and if the human race are not destined to moulder away as the leaves of autumn, but to rise to another, a renovated and an endless existence,—then is Socialism false; and so far as any one of these suppositions is the implication of a reality, so far is the ground narrowed on which Socialism has taken its stand. Accordingly, Socialists make it a chief part of their occupation, both by speaking and writing, to bring Christianity into discredit and contempt. They have fairly put the issue as between its truth and the truth of Socialism. They have staked the existence of their own system on the destruction of the religion of Jesus Christ. And it is fit that men should know the alternative, and especially that those should know it who may feel any inclination towards their doctrines. Owenism will not permit that you should be at the same time Christians and Socialists. It is a war of extirpation which it wages against every form of Christianity. It denounces it as false, as

having 'been tried for 1800 years and proved futile,'* nay more, as being the csuse 'of most, if not all, the evils which exist in the world.'† And not only would it wrest Christianity from society by the force of hardy and dogmatical assertions, but in the moral, or rather immoral atmosphere which it creates and throws around all who come within its influence, it seeks to poison, by the contagion of its scornful mockings, all those pure and delicate sympathies which constitute no small part of the gospel life in the soul of man. Most seriously, therefore, does it become every one who has found Christianity a good, to ponder the grave exchange which Socialism proposes; to sit down and soberly count the cost before he passes over into the camp of Socialism; and it may admit of a doubt whether it is wise in the professed follower of Christ, after he has become acquainted with the doctrines, proposals, and spirit which it presents, to venture near the precincts where its influences are dispensed. The least injurious result of even such an approach would be a waste of time.

Owenism has itself, as I have intimated—put the issue thus—Christianity is false, and, therefore, Owenism is true;—Owenism is true, and, therefore, Christianity is false. This, it must be admitted, is a bold and chivalrous method of warfare; but I am mistaken if it is not more rash than safe. It thus lays itself open to a double attack. Prove the religion of Jesus, you disprove Owenism;—or you may assail Owenism on its own independent grounds. Challenged as one of those Christian ministers, against whom and against whose teachings it levels its bolts, I have taken it in both its ways of assault, and, so far as the occasion permitted, proved that neither is Christianity false, nor Owenism true. Indeed Owenism, with all its vaunted certainty,

* Clarke's Christian Looking Glass.

† Book of the New Moral World, 1838.

consists in its fundamental doctrines of a series of propositions, each of which depends on the truth of its precursor, so that if you strike away but one link, the whole chain falls shivered to the ground; yet each successive link in the chain of argument depends for its certainty on no surer support than the faithfulness of the observation and accuracy of the reasoning,—where reasoning is attempted—of the fabricator of the system; while it is not merely allowed, but boldly proclaimed, hat the apprehensions and convictions of the entire of the civilized world, with a very few exceptions, are in direct and open contrariety to the novelties which he has expounded. Surely, if ever dogmatism was unbecoming, it is in such a case. But this is only another proof that hardihood of assertion is generally found in the inverse ratio of the goodness of a cause.

But amid the daring statements on which Owenism has ventured, none exceeds, if any parallel, the declaration that the influence of Christianity has been not only nugatory, but purely and universally baneful. And for myself, I am content to let the acceptableness of the religion of Jesus go before any jury of impartial men, on the simple question of the nature of its influence in the world; only I should require that the panel be impartial. Socialists themselves are not fit to try the case. They are pledged to its condemnation: their verdict is already given and published. Besides, they have, for the most part, succeeded in eradicating from their breasts those sympathies and charities to which the most advantageous appeal would have to be made; and no few of them must be left to a higher and a more effectual, if also a more painful, species of instruction than any mere human instrumentality can employ—the instruction of Providence in the experience through which it conducts each individual, and those by no means the least, who put the thought of God, duty, and eternity far from them.

The question, however, of the nature of the influence which the religion of Jesus has exerted on the world, may in one view be considered as settled with the great majority of men;—so far as they have seen, and known, and felt, they have found its influence beneficial. The evidence of its worth is in their own grateful experience. And when you remember that this evidence has come down through nearly two thousand years, and been felt and admitted by persons in almost every possible variety of condition, of external and internal condition; almost every possible variety in regard to clime, country, civilisation, age, and social position, you will feel that it is entitled to no mean respect. Certainly it is not at once to be set aside in the mind of the serious and the thoughtful, by the bold assertions of a man who has never made a personal trial of its efficacy, but, as is alleged, began what may, in courtesy, be termed his rational existence, by abstract convictions adverse to its truth.

I feel, however, little doubt that in his judgment of Christianity, Mr. Owen has, as so many others, been misled by an erroneous method of considering the subject. Unbelievers, as might easily be proved from their writings, have mistaken the corruptions of Christianity for Christianity itself; and thus led astray by the superficiality of their view, have renounced the power of godliness, because the accidental form in which they regarded it proved repulsive. No institution, however, whether of divine or human origin, not even Socialism itself, could stand before so false a test; and no man would be knowingly guilty of so great a mistake, who would wish to prove faithful to his opportunities and to his highest interests.

Another error has been to estimate Christianity solely by what were considered its obvious and prominent results. The tendency to this mistake has been grievously increased by the unhappy and prejudicial practice of historians, in dwelling on, if not all but exclusively pre-

senting in their pages, the darker features of the human character. For the most part, history, as it is commonly offered to the reader, has been a painful chronicle of war, bloodshed, ambition, and treachery. The true history of man has yet to be written. Where shall we find a detailed description of the goodness and virtue which have been the conservative power of society? or of the happiness of which it has been the creator and the witness, and of the graces and charities by which it has been adorned and blessed? Yet it is of the essence of the religion of Christ to call into being and sustain those very qualities which history has left unrecorded. The kingdom of God has ever come, and still comes, without observation. Its operation and its triumphs are within, in the gentleness, goodness, truth, and affection, in all those softer and more sacred virtues which naturally shun the public eye, and are too subtle, if they are not too sober, for the rough and gaudy pencil of the historian, but which have proved the very life and charm of individuals, and poured into the homes of civilized society,—into its cottages, its halls, and even in some degree its palaces, a stream of pure, solid, and lasting satisfactions. This is the great work and the great triumph of the religion of Jesus.

A third error is this;—not sufficient consideration has been given to the antagonist principle. The lower passions have ever stood, and still stand, in fearful array against the religion of Christ. It is no theological fiction, but a moral fact, that the human heart is prone to wickedness. I do not deny its capabilities for good; I maintain them. But as little can I run counter to experience, and deny its tendency to evil; the one is no less certain than the other. Now Christianity has no alliance with the powers of darkness. It is their enemy, not their associate; and consequently it has to subdue them ere it can exert its proper influence.

But these powers begin with the dawn of life, operate till its close, and are never known to have been entirely subjugated; and it must be remembered, that they are individual in their influence. They come into existence along with each successive human being; so that their subjugation has ever to be affected afresh. It is true, that there is a general tone of morality which, improving age after age, increases the power of society for good over its individual members; but it is also true, that the power hence acquired is but small, compared with the impulse with which the passions break forth in each one's breast; so that in the main Christianity has ever to work its work over and over again with each successive mind. A work of such a nature must of necessity be very gradual, as well as for the most part unobvious. And when it is considered how much the evil powers have received aid and co-operation from influences, for which Christianity is in no way answerable—from the downfall of ancient civilisation, from the incursions of barbarians, and the ignorance, vices, and brutality, which they brought with them, we shall have little reason to wonder, that its influence on society at large has not been more decided and prominent. But how unreasonable is it to attempt to judge of the moral influence of any system, without taking fully into account the antagonist principles with which it has had to contend. Of a necessity, that influence must have been modified by hostile influences, with which, in working its work, it came into conflict. In such a case, we are authorised to expect not more than a medium result—a result compounded at least in part of the uncongenial, the directly conflicting influence of vice, ignorance, and barbarism. Owenism may profess to slay its giants with a word, and make a greatly imperfect generation educate its successor in entire socialist perfection; but such a dream never entered into the mind of any rational

reformer, and every one out of its pale knows that it is an impossibility. And as well might you expect an entirely pure atmosphere to arise from the sun's rays, and the mists of the earth; or the streams to be as limpid when they fall into the ocean, as were the waters of the fountain whence they sprung, as to find any moral influence whatever operating with unmodified and unmingled power over the turbid and impure passions of the human heart, and the still more turbid and impure institutions of society.

But the great error of socialism in this particular has been in comparing the actual state of society with an ideal condition of its own formation. It first erects a standard of visionary excellence, and then condemns Christianity, because it has not brought society up to that: I should have said, down to that; for assuredly, in many respects, the standard of socialist perfection is low enough. But whether high or low, this is a false method of judging. In this way, every moral influence may be condemned. The proscription can no longer be maintained exclusively against Christianity. Philosophy is equally obnoxious to the charge. The human heart itself must take its full share of reprobation. Morality will have to abide the consequences of a verdict of guilty; nay, even Socialism will not appear blameless. In the person, the character, and the efforts of its founder, it has had now, for many years, a footing in the world. What has it effected? It has had a trial; it has made experiments; from time to time it has risen to something more substantial than fairy visions; but its palmy days are gone. Having suffered shipwreck here and there, and been denied a harbour in the metropolis of our own land, it has floated its shattered bark down into the provinces, and cast anchor among the quicksands of manufacturing turbulence and discontent. But where are the gains of its long and perilous voyage? The very charity which

it is, we are told, of the essence of its doctrines to create, is found nowhere but in the dark pages which unfold its doctrines, side by side with 'all uncharitableness'; or, at all events, has scarcely found one receptacle beyond the breast of him who gave the idea birth, and who has himself but ill-treated his own offspring.

It is almost too obvious to merit a distinct statement, that a better way than any of these errors presents, in order to form a just opinion and pronounce an equitable judgment of any moral influence, is to view it in its historical relations—to pass in review the adverse powers with which it had to contend—to take society as it found it at separate periods, and estimate the effect which in each case it produced. And if, in conjunction with this method of enquiry, you will also, as you ought to do, separate the religion of Jesus from the corruptions which associated themselves with it, which from time to time forced on it an uncongenial, nay, an unnatural, and even hostile partnership, you will, I feel no doubt, be led to see that that religion, so far as it did operate, and so far as it could operate, has produced, instead of a complicated train of evils, nothing but pure unmingled good. And indeed this conclusion might be arrived at inferentially, for if, as I have shown, the spirit of Jesus, which is the essence of his religion, was, and is one of intellectual freedom and moral power—one of power, and of love, and of a sound mind—one of mercy, gentleness, truth, and philanthropy—then it must have proved a blessing to humanity, so far as it could gain predominance; and to say that it has been a source of human wretchedness is to affirm, that these are qualities which it is baneful for man to see, to feel, and to cherish; or if you shrink from so monstrous an error, then must you take up the alternative, and dilate on the badness and perversity of that nature, which qualities so benign in their tendencies had been unable to reform.

As however, it is of the nature of Christianity to produce its best and greatest effects in the secrecy of individual and private life, so in order to do full justice to its claims, it is there that I ought to attempt to trace its operation. But the very character of that operation in being free from display, renders it less appreciable by those whose moral vision is too dull for the finer sentiments of our nature, and is more open to the broad glare of facts. I shall therefore view the religion of Jesus in the benefits it has conferred on society at large. To do my duty by the subject would require volumes. I can hope only to furnish one or two brief and imperfect sketches.

I turn my attention to the condition of the world about the time when Christianity was first proclaimed, and what do I behold? There is no occasion to dwell on the condition of our own country and that of the greater part of Europe. The ordinary passions, the ordinary vices, which agitate and disgrace a state of barbarism; the cruel fanaticism which has ever among ignorant nations immolated human beings on the altars of ferocious deities; and the alternations of extreme indulgence and extreme want which must attend on the wanderings and precariousness of savage life, were but slightly mitigated in the case of our ancestors, by a certain generosity of natural temperament and a slight advance towards social improvement. I will at once ask you to take the least unfavorable view, and place yourself amidst the civilisation of ancient Rome. A superficial attention will call up before you the splendor of its conquests; the triumphs which the resources of art enabled it to achieve over nature; the durable monuments which it has left in its temples, arches, pillars; and the yet more durable, the everlasting monuments in which its discoveries, thoughts, and emotions remain consecrated. But look a little more deeply into its social condition. I wish

not to depreciate its grandeurs, but I wish their real value to be known. The civilisation of the Roman empire lay, for the most part, on the surface;—it was dazzling, but not deep. It respected society rather than the individual. And so far as it tended to the cultivation of individuals, t was pre-eminently a respecter of persons, and showered its favors exclusively on a few. The great mass of its subjects it held in all the debasements and cruelties of slavery, or in moral degradation and social contempt, which was, perhaps, rather enhanced than alleviated by the false pride of Roman citizenship. Its literary cultivation was attended by vices which would now be held in horror by all but the very dregs of society; nor did the poet blush to celebrate passions, at which unsophisticated nature revolts, and which dry up all the channels of the heart. Its moral civilisation, such as it was, had neither depth nor strength, and was altogether unpenetrated by a spirit of humanity. A gilded selfishness was not only prevalent but approved; and the most popular writer of the Augustan age has given expression, more than once, to the scornful arrogance with which the bulk of society was regarded by the exclusive refinement of the day. Beyond the narrow limits of a self-seeking patriotism, no generous feeling animated the breast even of the most cultivated; and on what a slender foundation that patriotism was based, the morbid love of fame, the living on the popular breath, seen in the writings of one whom the senate hailed as 'Father of his country,' makes manifest, in evidence the most ample, painful, and sickening. Indeed, patriotism is a word which is in no way applicable to most of the characters of the age, whom the canvas of history presents to our view. The lust of power was their exclusive inducement, self-aggrandizement their only aim; and in the means which they employed, there were those who did not hesitate to deluge Rome with

the blood of its noblest citizens, and to debase the people by every kind of social and political corruption. A species of thinly-veiled sensualism prevailed throughout the upper classes of society, which it would be most offensive to characterise, and for whose gratification, land and sea, east and west, were ransacked, and even nature itself put to the torture. Nations and kingdoms were conquered, not merely to extend the glory of the Roman name, but to serve as prey to the rapacity of statesmen, and enable the ambitious, by means of foreign wealth, to keep in good humour the bulk of the idle, turbulent, and vicious populace of the city. For the same unworthy purpose, the chiefs and monarchs of conquered nations were, together with their wives and children, led, burthened with chains and covered with indignity, through the thronging streets of the capital of the world, up to the national temple, where religion was dishonoured by being made the patron of cruel ambition. And equally for the same unworthy purpose, thousands of victims were slain each by the other, in conflicts with beasts of prey, as 'the playthings of a crowd.'

I see before me the gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony;
And his dropp'd head sinks gradually low—
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower: and now
The arena swims around him—he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

He heard it, but heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost, nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay;
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday,—
All this rush'd with his blood.

'The Dacian mother'; so was it at first; captives, slaves, and culprits originally furnished the arena: then came citizens of Rome fighting for hire, or impelled by a low ambition; then knights and senators; and lastly, dwarfs, and even women fought. 'Besides the torrents of blood which flowed at the funerals, in the amphitheatres, the circus, the forums, and other public places, gladiators were introduced at feasts, and tore each other in pieces amidst the supper tables, to the great delight and applause of the guests.' There were other public amusements, the practices in which, though performed by females—by the matrons of Rome—decency forbids me to do more than allude to; yet were they a part of the legal institutions of the state; and so far as I know, there is but one instance on record of their being disapproved; I refer to the circumstance, that the virtuous Cato withdrew in pain and humiliation from the offensive spectacle offered by the Floral Games.

Perhaps there were redeeming qualities. There were; but they are to be looked for mainly in the native and indelible instincts of the human heart, and the influence thereon of a bright and genial clime. If I go to philosophy, I find its prevalence confined within the narrowest limits; I find its appearance stunted and sickly, as was likely in a plant not indigenous, but brought into an uncongenial soil from the parental lands of Greece. And its operation was on the surface of the character, shining over, without kindling the mind, and leaving the heart unpenetrated, and the life uninformed. If I go to religion, I see its very ministers unable to restrain the smile which the eye of one awoke on the face of the other, when, jointly engaged in the sacred ceremonies, they chanced to encounter each other's look. Philosophy and social dignity took to themselves the offices of religion, and concealing atheistical sentiments under

the sacerdotal robe, abused the popular superstition in order to forward their own selfishness, instead of availing themselves of their knowledge and power to enlighten and reform the public mind. And occasions there were, when, under the cloak or by the sanction of religion itself, the lowest passions were gratified and indulged; or even human blood was impiously shed.* Nor were these crimes, which were studiously screened from the eye of day as too abominable for the moral feelings to endure. Public opinion—so far as such a thing can be said to have existed—had no reprobation to utter; when it did not approve, it was acquiescent; and philosophy itself, though it might have suspected ill, was too selfish or too cowardly to denounce it. Domestic life then, as at every other time, doubtless had its virtues, but they were virtues of a slave-holding community, and for that, if for no other reason, could not have been of superior excellence. There went through the villages and homes of the land,† a stream of degrading sensual corruption, which could receive but little check from the shadowy notions entertained of a futurity, and which the obscene stories that formed the very substance of their ideas of the gods, tended to swell and make turbid. But look at the power of the Roman father. Even socialism could not so easily disembarrass itself of the care of providing for offspring. A child is born: it remained with the father to determine whether it should survive its first breath. Unless he received it into his arms, it had not the rights of legitimacy, and if it was his behest, it was exposed to

* B. Constant de la Religion, vol. iv. chapitre 7me. But those who would become acquainted with details respecting the state of religion at Rome during the first and second century, details to which not even an allusion could with propriety be made in the Lecture itself, may consult the 2d chapter 1st book of the same work.

† Rites of Cybele and the Bona Dea, Juvenal, Sat. vi..; in which is a frightful picture of the union of foulness and superstition.

perish. Should it be permitted to grow up to youth, all the while the father held over it the power of life and death; and for any grave act of disobedience, he might imprison, scourge, or even slay his child: but enough.

I pass on a few centuries. Meanwhile Christianity has been at work in the bosom of society. True, the corruptions of heathenism, and the corruptions of human nature, had grown around, and even into its very heart. Yet private life begins to appear more human, more virtuous, more happy—the lower passions are subdued, the higher and better affections are encouraged. Fidelity, affection, truth, and honour, are born and grow; individual power is called forth and fostered; religion begins to sway the breast;—among its earliest effects is a sense of brotherhood. The heart, now regenerated, and conscious of the good, becomes desirous to communicate its blessings, and the very excess and abuse of its feelings, in the undue anxiety manifested in favour of proselytism, shows the strength as well as the benevolence of the power that has been newly created. Nor does it limit its efforts to the moral and spiritual wants of others. Their physical condition, before utterly disregarded, or contumeliously contemned, excites tender concern, and awakens the most generous efforts; and soon heathenism* is found making it a reproach to Christians, that they support its poor as well as their own. And onward does this stream of benevolence flow, becoming wider and deeper with the lapse of time, till not a human want is there, not a human malady, but is supplied by the benign genius of the religion of Christ with its appropriate balm and remedy. I say not, that this spirit of charity has been always as wise as it was intense; but here again, the very misuse which human weakness has made of the power, demonstrates its vita-

* In the person of Julian.

lity and strength. This is also true, that Christianity has given birth to an antagonist principle in the formation of individual independence of character, which, so far as the inferior passions have allowed it to operate, has powerfully tended to abate and control the excesses of the principle of charity, and will eventually, I believe, bring it within its proper limits. Certainly, in ancient times there was no occasion to complain of the excess of benevolence, and as little scope among the people for the growth of a manly independence. Philanthropy and individuality, the principle which cares for the race, and that which constitutes the true dignity and happiness of each human being, were rarely if ever found; or found only in forms of speculation.

As a consequence of the operation of these Christian influences, slavery is first mitigated and then abolished. Religious toleration, unknown even in theory hitherto, is expounded as a duty, asserted as a right, and, for a time, maintained in practice. The paternal power is converted from an engine of brute force into the gentle appliances of reason and love. And the great public crime which, as I have intimated, made Rome a slaughter-house of human victims, is first disallowed by public opinion, and then abolished by law. This achievement for humanity was, beyond a doubt, effected by the silent influence on society of Christian principles; but the immediate cause assigned for the putting down gladiatorial fights, is worthy of mention, not only as exemplifying the power of Christian principle, but illustrating also the change which had been wrought in the spirit of the times. It was in the reign of the Emperor Honorius, at the commencement of the fifth century, that an eastern monk, by name Telemachus, travelled to Rome, intent on the benign purpose of putting a period to these disgraceful games. The combatants were engaged in deadly conflict; the people looked on with a lively, yet subdued interest; one of the highest magistrates presided,

and sanctioned the scene not only by his presence, but his warm approval; when, in the midst of the strife, the monk rushed in and strove to separate the combatants. The Prætor, indignant at the interruption given to a sport in which he delighted, ordered the gladiators to turn their arms against the intruder. The Christian hero was met with death; but the triumph he sought was achieved, for the Emperor immediately abolished gladiatorial shows, and they were never afterwards revived.

I direct my thoughts to a later period. I find that barbarism has come in like a deluge over western and southern Europe. It has swept away or covered ancient civilisation, and even polluted the influences of Christianity. Feudalism is established everywhere, and its symbols are absolutism, vassalage, slavery, and violence. The will of one is law, whether that one be the great or the petty tyrant, and that will is penetrated by benevolence as little as by wisdom. Brute force is the predominant secular power. The sword is the sole arbiter of right and wrong. Indeed, all rights are sunk in the right of the strongest. In each nation you behold on one side the monarch and his nobles in union or in conflict, and on the other, the people at large, groaning under the oppressive yoke of personal and domestic slavery. War rages in unmitigated fury, and every district is fiercely agitated by the broils of envious nobles, or the deadly hatreds of rival clans. The mind, as well as the heart, suffers universal neglect at the hands of the dominant power. It is the reign of ignorance; darkness covers the land, and gross darkness the people. Where was there a remedial power? what light pierced the gloom? There is no earthly resource. The principle of civilisation is crushed or overlaid. The elements of civil liberty scarcely appear in embryo. No taste for knowledge, and none of its fruits. The earth is 'void and without form.' But there *was* a sun, how

obscure soever its shining in an atmosphere so dense and troubled. The religion of Christ was the morning star of modern European civilisation. That the religion of Christ then existed in a corrupted form, I readily admit; and it is by no means easy, nor in the present instance is it necessary, to distinguish in their operations the germ of truth from the corruptions with which it was encrusted. It has been not unusual to utter an entire proscription of the Catholic Church, as it existed in what are termed 'the dark ages'; but in this warfare, as is not uncommon, more zeal than knowledge has been exhibited. I indeed deplore the corruptions and the evils they engendered; but I am also convinced that they were not without their benefits. However this may be, it is beyond a question that the only, to speak in general terms, the only corrective and reformative power lay in the influence of a degenerated Christianity. It might have been better for the pure influence of Christian principle itself to have furnished the antidote. It is also not impossible that some admixture of earthly influence was requisite to secure for religion a seat and a throne in grossly sensual bosoms. To take the religion of Jesus, however, as we find it, wrought, together with much corruption, into a spiritual organisation, designated the Church. In its movements, this corporate body was at the first actuated by principles and impulses which no Christian need be ashamed to avow;—soon, however, inferior passions gained a predominance, and a lust of power became the ruling passion. But what can more strikingly illustrate the benign tendency of Christianity than that its very abuse should, in many cases, prove of service to mankind? Even in seeking the furtherance of their own low designs, men have been compelled, churchmen, princes, have been compelled to enunciate principles, and to avow purposes, which, by an indirect operation, have tended not only to benefit the many, but to retard and eventually to bring to an end the very evils

which the ambitious and the selfish committed in its name.

There were three channels in which the Christian Church rendered, directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, important services to modern Europe, anterior to the Reformation. First, it was a principle of organisation. The civilisation of the ancient world, together with its forms of government, were broken in pieces by the collision with it of the barbarous hordes. Europe became the domain of anarchy. But in the Christian Church there was a regular and systematic government, a gradation of orders subordinated to a central power. This organisation became an example and an impulse. It proved a constituent power;—it served as a nucleus around which ideas of social government might gather, which, afterwards germinating, brought forth the first shoots of social organisation. It thus collected the scattered forces of society, moulded the individual power of barons and petty princes into one organised body, and rescued country after country out of the evils of social anarchy. Government again existed, in an imperfect form indeed, yet not much inferior to the gilded tyranny of Augustus,—better than the cruel and bloody domination of a Marius and a Sylla, and far preferable to the enfeebling and devastating sway of later Roman Emperors. Government again existed, acquired stability, developed a power of self-improvement, and thus laid the foundation and paved the way for the continual progress of civilisation. And when the heads of the several organised states of Europe, yet not more advanced, than at the furthest, midway between barbarism and civilisation, gave a loose to their brutal passions, it was the voice of religion that arrested their hands of violence, and stayed their wasteful career. A diobedient city is sacked, and its inhabitants put to the sword. The perpetrator of the crime is summoned before a tribunal, at the mere thought of which he trembles,

and is compelled to offer, in the severity of the penance he is made to undergo, an example and a warning which speak to the most absolute monarchs of the world. In the midst of the broken elements of social organisation, and before they had again coalesced, war, under the goad of revengeful passions, rages between rival chiefs in every district; religion interposes her voice, and what she cannot put an end to, she mitigates, and in the name of God, establishes and succeeds in enforcing brief but most useful intervals of peace. A crowned tyrant proves treacherous to his most solemn engagements, and his subjects, now beginning to rise out of the depths of ignorance, appeal to the Church;—the imbecile and cruel despot is divested of his crown, and made to receive it again on his knees with lowly promises of a more righteous course. And should any monarch, in the presumption of mind engendered by his power, venture to resist the spiritual arms of the Church, his only reward is a heavier infliction, and he is driven to sue barefoot for days together in the depth of winter at the gates of the papal palace, for pardon of his offences and restoration to favour. These things are not mentioned as instances of abstract good, but as proofs of the mitigating influence which religion exerted over depositories of civil power, whose career otherwise would have been purely disastrous. But so far as the Church tended to lay the basis of social institutions, to weaken the arm of oppression, to alleviate the hardships of the people, to abate the horrors of war, and thus to prepare the way for constitutional governments, the arbitrament of reason, the practical acknowledgment of social rights, so far—and these, its deeds, are of high importance—so far it deserved well of mankind, and should meet with a just award of approbation.

But secondly,—the institutions of the Church were of a popular character. In ancient times, and under the sway of feudalism, the people were nothing; nothing,

at least, but victims or tools. But popular elections prevailed in the first germs of the organisations of the church, and continued, though with diminished observance, down through many centuries. When, however, the people even ceased to have in their own hands the choice and the support of their religious teachers, they still retained the full right of admission to all the orders of ecclesiastical power. Indeed, the Church, well knowing where its strength lay, constantly recruited its ranks from the humblest classes; and thus called forth an ambition to rise, and those efforts and powers on which an elevation in society depends. In consequence, a feeling of moral equality, ideas of liberty, a love of liberty, a striving for liberty, were diffused throughout the social system. The father, the brothers, the neighbours of a youth, who, from the sheepfold had been raised to a rank where the priestly office communicated a sanctity at which nobles and kings reverently bent the knee, could not long continue to grovel in the debasements of slavery, must certainly have gathered ideas and feelings which would in time assume a definite shape, grow into individual and social power, and become, in their general operation, the ground-work of improved political institutions. The individual power thus called forth would conduce to social efficiency; hence wealth,—wealth would favor the spread of intelligence, and intelligence, supported by wealth, would lead to social distinction. The powers that were must have felt this new-born and growing influence, must have received modifications from it; and at last they began to assume that shape which, in admitting representatives of the people into partnership with themselves, has wrought out a good for Europe, of which, what has yet been experienced, large as comparatively it is, will prove but a slight foretaste eventually.

The third beneficial influence of the Church, to which I alluded, consists in the diffusion of knowledge, of which

it was the parent. Unhappily, in recent times, ecclesiastical corporations have universally sought to narrow and check the stream of enlightenment, and therefore men have come to regard them as the necessary, as well as the open, enemies of human improvement. In the times, however, of which I speak, the Church was compelled to further the diffusion of knowledge, even when it was not prompted thereto by a spontaneous movement of benevolence. Its power was essentially intellectual and moral. By the nature of its mission, and more by the very condition of its existence, its work was to favor liberty and diffuse light. Hence universities founded in every nation and many of the cities of the least dark portions of Europe; hence schools in connexion with the palace of the bishop and the abbey of the monk; hence those collections, and that perpetual transcription of manuscripts, by which the relics of ancient civilisation were preserved and floated down to modern days. With all its faults—and they were many—the Christian Church proved the ark of the higher learning, as well as the palladium of liberty. It kept alive the sap of human improvement during the long and severe winter through which Europe passed, till the spring time and summer should call forth leaves and elaborate germs into fruit.

If there is truth in these remarks, then, at and since the revival of letters and the Reformation, you cannot deny that the religion of Jesus justly claims no insignificant award of praise. At least it sowed and watered the seed of the harvest which we have reaped, are reaping, and shall reap. And could we succeed in separating from the religion of Jesus the unholy passions and influences which were blended with it in the organised form it assumed under the shape of the Catholic Church, you would, I feel no doubt, discover that its own unadulterated operation had been both purely and largely beneficial.

But for a moment call to mind a few plain facts. The greater part of Europe has been delivered out of the chains of personal thraldom. It is a mere abuse of words to talk of 'white slavery.' I admit, and I deplore, the degraded and unhappy lot in which large portions of the working classes still remain. But they are free to think, to speak, to act, to go whither they will, to carry their labour to the best market, and to rise to any position which their abilities may enable them to command. Then look at the general diffusion of knowledge, at the immense circulation of cheap literature. The very ability to assail Christianity, has been born of the influences of which Christianity is the parent. Look also at the general spread of the comforts, and what were formerly the luxuries of life. On the table of the day labourer, and around his cottage, the four quarters of the globe come and lay their choice productions. Look at the schools which stand in every hamlet in Europe, and in the case of no few of its lands, effect much of what the philanthropist could most ardently desire. Think how many streams of private benevolence steal forth from our homes to water, refresh, and invigorate our barren spots. Benevolence standeth in our streets, and crieth to the destitute, the ignorant, the sick, the maimed, the blind, the deaf, the dumb; 'Ho, every one that thirsteth come, even he that hath no money; Come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price.' See how the love of human kind, called forth and sustained by the love of Christ, is sending, and has sent devoted men and women into all parts of the uncivilised world; and though you should have no fellow-feeling with the exertions they make on behalf of religion, you cannot deny that they have been the advanced guard of civilisation; nor that in the abolition of cruel rites, the extinction of barbarous superstitions, the putting an end to the exposure of the aged, the mis-treatment or the ill-treatment of the sick, the immolation of the widow, to

infanticide, to wars of extermination; and in the introduction of the arts and sciences of civilised life, of a taste for knowledge, of an idea and a want for the comforts of home, they have rendered services to their race, and manifested a spirit of humanity, to which there is no parallel nor approach in the previous history of mankind. But of details on this point there is no end: the man must be ignorant, or wilfully blind, who would assert, that Europe is not far advanced in those things which bless and adorn humanity, beyond what it was at any anterior period. As futile is the attempt to deny or disown the influence of the religion of Christ in these grand achievements. What was the revival of letters, but the bringing forth to light of those germs of intelligence and refinement which Christianity had fostered in its bosom? And who but Christians drew the remains of ancient letters from the cloister, and diffused them throughout the world? The Reformation was the first great result of the revival of letters, and the Reformation was the offspring of the Bible, and the work of a monk. In these two grand events lay the impulse of all our subsequent triumphs. They were the epochs of the new birth of Europe. The invention of printing, the discovery and colonisation of the New World, the discoveries of science, the application of science to the arts, the improvements in medicine, the increased value of human life; the intellectual and moral power, before which the blaze of diadems grows dim, and the sceptre of monarchs is changed from a rod of oppression into a bauble of office, and by which—a higher triumph—individuals become conscious of their rights, their duties—conscious of the worth and dignity of their nature, and home is made the abode of happiness, and the nursery of sterling principle, and of the purer virtues and more refined graces of life;—all this multiplicity of good has ensued from the impulse which Europe received some three centuries since, and from the quiet but efficacious

operation on its condition of the great principles of the religion of Jesus.

You have now before you some means of determining whether the socialist charge against Christianity, of having proved baneful to man, is just or unjust.

I have in this instance, as in some others, during this course of lectures, given Socialism the advantage of stating its position in a mitigated form. Its customary declaration has been that Christianity is the cause of all our social ills. In the words of one of its writers,* 'it *never* has done good, has *always* done harm, and ever will so long as it exists.' 'Christianity has been the harbinger of discord, plunder, and bloodshed wherever she has extended her devastating influence; and no country exists on the face of the globe where the attempt to Christianize the inhabitants has not been attended with, at least, the partial loss of freedom and of happiness to those inhabitants.' 'The Christian religion is nothing more than a fashion, that can only exist with ignorance; it has been productive of hypocrisy and superstition; it will be the duty, business, and tendency of superior intelligence to uproot this gigantic scourge.'

Wherever there is any knowledge of the history of the world, such extravagancies confute themselves. But in ignorance they find a prepared and a rank soil. The Christian, then, cannot fail to see his duty. His motto must be 'Educate, educate, educate.' Thus, and thus only, can the evil tendencies of Owenism be effectually encountered. Let the system only be met by the diffusion of knowledge, its existence will be of short duration, and that religion which it has made the special object of its assaults, will prove a rock on which it will be ground to pieces.

* Horton's Survey of the Effects of Christianity.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note 1.

Page 5—*'The economical arrangements proposed for adoption in the New Moral World,'*

Socialists are wont to affirm, that in respect of community of property, they do but propose to imitate the first Christians. I, therefore, translate the following from a very respectable and an impartial authority:—

"'And they had all things common.'

"Many writers have before remarked that these words should not be too much insisted on, nor interpreted as intimating an absolute communion of property; and have supported their position by suitable arguments. For, from the circumstance that the richer Christians are said, in order to aid the poverty of their companions, to have sold their houses and lands, and deposited the price in the hands of the Apostles for the use of the poor, it by no means follows that they stripped themselves of all their property: in fact, the meaning of the words is this,—the richer, that they might confer more abundant benefits on their fellow-Christians of a slenderer fortune, used to dispose of a portion of their property which they could without great detriment do without, in order that they might supply, by means of the sale of possessions, aid which the annual income did not furnish. It is sufficiently clear, from many other passages of this book, that the words of the writer are to be understood in this sense, and that no idea is contained

in them of a contribution made by private persons of their whole property. For we read, Acts iv., 32, 'Neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common;' which words plainly enough declare *that the produce only of the possessions was common, not the possessions themselves*. Further, Peter is said to have addressed Ananias thus—'Whiles it remained was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it (the money) not in thine own power?' How could Peter truly say it was in the power of Ananias not to sell the land, or to keep to himself the price of the land when sold, if, of necessity, by the laws of the society, all things were to be distributed in common? It is evident, therefore, from this place, that there were individuals among the Christians who had possessions, properly their own, and who retained their property. Besides, mention is made of Mary having a dwelling-house at Jerusalem. Nor had community of property any place in the other Christian societies. No traces of this custom are to be met with in the letters of the Apostles. By the advice of the Apostles money was collected for the use of the poor. Paul exhorts the Corinthians, every one of them on the first day of the week to lay in store something in his own house for the use of the poor. The Corinthians, therefore, retained their property. The same Apostle tells the Thessalonians, to earn their subsistence by hand labour, and places before them his own example for imitation in that he did not desire to obtain subsistence from any person for nothing, but procured it by his own labor. So that the words '*and they had all things common*' are to be understood popularly, and in the same sense as the old proverb in Plato, '*friends have all things common*':—that is, as Seneca writes, 'Whatever my friend has is common to us, but is properly his who

possesses it; without his consent I cannot make use of it.' By the words in question, therefore, is signified the zealous and pre-eminent practice of beneficence and liberality."—*Kuinoel on Acts ii. 44.*

Note 2.

Page 15—'*It is an historical fact, that before the end of the first century, its prevalence became an object of earnest solicitude to the Emperors of Rome themselves, and that its professors were subjected to penalties and persecutions at the hands of Roman governors.*'

Suetonius, in his life of the Emperor Claudius, who reigned from 41 to 54 A.D., says of him—'He banished the Jews from Rome, who were continually making disturbances, Chrestus (Christ) being their leader,' (See Acts xviii., 2.)

In his life of Nero, whose reign began in 54 and ended in 68, the same writer says,—'The Christians were *punished*, a sort of men of a *new* and magical (miraculous) superstition.'

On account of its full and explicit statements, as well as because it exhibits the spirit and extent of persecution, of which I discourse in the third lecture, I transcribe several parts of Pliny's letter to Trajan. Pliny was born in the year 61, A.D., was Consul in 100, A.D.; and being governor of Pontus and Bithynia, wrote, in the year 106, to the Emperor Trajan, for directions as to the measures he should pursue towards Christians, *after*, let it be noticed, he had persecuted them.

'I have never been present at any trials of Christians' (trials then had been customary), 'so that I know not well what is the subject matter of punishment, or of inquiry, or what strictness ought to be used in either. Nor have I been a little perplexed to determine whether any difference ought to be made upon account of age, or whether the young and tender, and the full-grown and robust, ought to be treated all alike: whether re-

pentance should entitle to pardon, or whether all who have once been Christians ought to be punished, though they are now no longer so; whether the name itself, although no crimes be detected, or crimes only belonging to the name, ought to be punished.' (It is a fair presumption that all these rigid measures of persecution had been pursued.). 'In the meantime, I have taken this course;—I have put the question to them, whether they were Christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening, also, to punish them with death. *Such as still persisted, I ordered away to be punished, for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished.*'

'In a short time, the *crime* spreading itself, divers sorts of people came in my way.' 'An *information* was presented to me, without mentioning the author, containing the names of many persons.' 'Others were named by *an informer*;—some said they had been Christians three years ago, some longer, and a few *above twenty years.*' 'I have examined, and that *by torture*, two *maid servants*, who were called ministers; but I have discovered nothing besides a bad and excessive superstition.' 'Suspending all judicial proceedings, I have recourse to you for advice; for it has appeared to *me a matter highly deserving consideration, especially upon account of the great number of persons who are in danger of suffering. For many of all ages and every rank, of both sexes likewise, are accused, and will be accused. Nor has the contagion of this superstition seized cities only, but the lesser towns also, and the open country.* Nevertheless, it seems to me that it may be restrained and corrected. It is certain that the temples, *which were almost forsaken*, begin to be more frequented, and the sacred solemnities, *after a long intermission*, are revived. Victims likewise are every where bought

up, whereas *for some time there were few purchasers.*' (The Pagan religion could scarcely have been brought to this condition under half a century, which takes back the origin of Christianity in Asia Minor to within twenty years after the death of its founder.)

The Emperor answers: — '*You have acted as you ought to do.* If any are brought before you, and are convicted, *they must be punished.* However, he that denies his being a Christian, and makes it evident in fact, that is, by supplicating our gods, may, on repentance, be pardoned, though suspected to have been a Christian formerly.'

NOTE 3—p. 53.

I subjoin the following authorities on the persecutions of which heathens were guilty.

'The passions which mingle themselves with opinions made the Pagans very often intolerant and persecutors; witness the Persians, the Egyptians, even the Greeks and Romans.

'1st.—THE PERSIANS.—Cambyses, conqueror of the Egyptians, condemned to death the magistrates of Memphis, because they had offered divine honours to their god, Apis; he caused the god to be brought before him, struck him with his dagger, commanded the priests to be scourged, and ordered a general massacre of all the Egyptians who should be found celebrating the festival of Apis: he caused all the statues of the gods to be burnt. Not content with this intolerance, he sent an army to reduce the Ammonians to slavery, and to set on fire the temple in which Jupiter delivered his oracles.

'2nd.—THE EGYPTIANS.—They thought themselves defiled when they had drunk from the same cup, or eaten at the same table, with a man of a different belief from their own.' 'He who has voluntarily killed any sacred animal is punished with death; but if any one,

even involuntarily, has killed a cat or an ibis, he cannot escape the extreme penalty; the people drag him away, treat him in the most cruel manner, sometimes without waiting for a judicial sentence. Even at the time when king Ptolemy was not yet the acknowledged friend of the Roman people, while the multitude were paying court with all possible attention to the strangers who came from Italy, a Roman having killed a cat, the people rushed to his house, and neither the entreaties of the nobles, whom the king sent to them, nor the terror of the Roman name, were sufficiently powerful to rescue the man from punishment, though he had committed the crime involuntarily."—*Diod. Sic.* Juvenal, in his 13th Satire, describes the sanguinary conflict between the inhabitants of Ombos and of Tentyra from religious animosity. The fury was carried so far, that the conquerors tore and devoured the quivering limbs of the conquered.

'3rd —THE GREEKS.—"Let us not here," says the Abbé Guenée, "refer to the cities of Peloponnesus and their severity against atheism; the Ephesians persecuting Heraclitus for impiety; the Greeks armed one against the other by religious zeal in the Amphictyonic war. Let us say nothing either of the frightful cruelties inflicted by three successors of Alexander upon the Jews, to force them to abandon their religion; nor of Antiochus expelling the philosophers from his state. Let us not seek our proofs of intolerance so far off. Athens, the polite and learned Athens, will supply us with sufficient examples. Every citizen made a public and solemn vow to conform to the religion of his country, to defend it, and to cause it to be respected. An express law severely punished all discourses against the gods; and a rigid decree ordered the denunciation of all who should deny their existence. The practice was in unison with the severity of the law. The proceedings

commenced against Protageras; a price set upon the head of Diagoras; the danger of Alcibiades; Aristotle obliged to fly; Stilpo banished; Anaxagoras hardly escaping death; Pericles himself, after all his services to his country, and all the glory he had acquired, compelled to appear before the tribunals, and make his defence; a priestess executed for having introduced strange gods; Socrates condemned and drinking the hemlock, because he was accused of not recognizing those of his country, &c.: these facts attest too loudly, to be called in question, the religious intolerance of the most humane and enlightened people in Greece."

"4th.—THE ROMANS.—The laws of Rome were not less express and severe. The intolerance of foreign religions reaches, with the Romans, as high as the laws of the twelve tables; the prohibitions were afterwards renewed at different times. Intolerance did not discontinue under the Emperors; witness the counsel of Mæcænas to Augustus. This counsel is so remarkable that I think it right to insert it entire. "Honour the gods yourself," says Mæcænas to Augustus, "in every way according to the usage of your ancestors, and compel others to worship them. Hate and punish those who introduce strange gods, not only for the sake of the gods (he who despises them will respect no one), but because those who introduce new gods engage a multitude of persons in foreign laws and customs. From hence arise unions bound by oaths, and confederacies and associations, things dangerous to a monarchy."

'Even the laws which the philosophers of Athens and of Rome wrote for their imaginary republics are intolerant. Plato does not leave to his citizens freedom of religious worship; and Cicero expressly prohibits them from having other gods than those of the state.'

(Milman's Notes to chapter xv. sec. 1. of Gibbon's Decline and Fall.)

'Cicero (de Legibus, c. ii., s. 8.) gives us the following extract from the most ancient laws of Rome. "Let no one have any separate worship, nor hold any new gods; neither to strange gods, unless they have been publicly adopted, let any private worship be offered; men should attend the temples erected by their ancestors, &c." From Livy (b. iv., c. 30) we learn that about 430 years before Christ orders were given to the Œdiles to see "that none except Roman gods were worshipped, nor in any other than the established forms." Somewhat more than 200 years after this edict, to crush certain external rites which were then becoming common in the city, the following edict was published:—"that whoever possesses books of oracle, or prayer, or any written act of sacrifice, deliver all such books and writings to the Prætor before the calends of April; and that no one sacrifice on public or sacred ground after new or foreign rites." But it may seem needless to produce separate instances, when, from the same historian, (b. xxxix. c. 16) we learn that it had been customary in all the early ages of the republic, to empower the magistrates "to prevent all foreign worship, to expel its ministers from the forum, the circus, and the city, to search for and burn the religious books (vaticinos libros), and to abolish every form of sacrifice except the national and established form."

The authority of Livy is confirmed by that of Valerius Maximus, who wrote under the Emperor Tiberius, and bears testimony to the jealousy with which all foreign religions were prohibited by the Roman republic (b. i., c. 3). That the same principle, which had been consecrated by the practice of seven hundred years was not discontinued by the Emperors, is clearly attested by the historian, Dio Cassius (p. 490—2). It appears that Mæcœnas, in the most earnest terms, exhorted Augustus "to hate and punish" all foreign religions, and to compel

all men to conform to the national worship; and we are assured that the scheme of government thus proposed, was pursued by Augustus, and adopted by his successors.

Now, from the first of the passages before us it appears, that all right of private judgment in matters of religion was expressly forbidden by an original law of Rome, which was never repealed. We know not what stronger proof it would be possible to adduce of the inherent intolerance of Roman Polytheism. The four next references prove to us that the ancient law, subversive of the most obvious right of human nature, was strictly acted upon during the long continuance of the commonwealth.'

Rev. G. Waddington's History of the Church, chapter iv. sub init. (In the Library of Useful Knowledge.)

Note 4.—p. 61.

That persecution is the result of an evil spirit, rather than of any particular opinions, may be still further illustrated by the following remarks.

An authority which will not be suspected of any leaning towards Christianity, *L'Encyclopédie*, under the article *Intolerant*, justly says, 'The intolerant person ought to be regarded in every place of the world as a *man who sacrifices the spirit and the precepts of his religion to his pride*; he is the rash character who thinks that the ark must be sustained by his hands; persecutors are generally *men without religion*, and who find it more easy to manifest zeal, than to acquire excellence.'

There is reason to believe that in many cases persons holding infidel opinions have, under the cloak and pretext of religion, manifested a persecuting spirit. It is of the philosophers of the age of the Antonines—an age in which philosophy itself was seen associated with

the practice of persecution, that Gibbon speaks in the following passage—a passage which, with but too many others in his celebrated work, will perpetuate the dishonesty of the writer's mind, as long as his genius shall secure the popularity of the work :—' Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence, the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temple of the gods; and sometimes condescending to act a part in the theatre of superstition, *they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes.*' So then, Atheists themselves have been persecutors. If the criminality of persecution can be enhanced, it is, surely, in the case of those who have no religious convictions for the furtherance of which to be solicitous.

I am not ignorant of the services which Voltaire and others of the French philosophical school of the 18th century, rendered to the cause of religious toleration, by the exposition and enforcement of many of its most important principles. For this work—a work specially needed in their day and country, I yield to no one in the meed of praise which I award to them. But it is possible to defend toleration in an intolerant spirit, and to persecute with the very pen with which you assail persecution. And that several of these philosophers acted in this way, the reader may easily learn by reference to their writings, and especially to that more intimate and confidential expression of their feelings which their correspondence with each other exhibits. See *Diderot, Correspondence; and Grimm, Correspondence litteraire.* Extracts from the correspondence of *Voltaire* with *D'Alembert* and others, may be found in the 17th vol. of *Priestley's* Works by *Rutt*, where that true Christian and eminent philosopher has rightly characterised the scoffing, disdainful, not to say inhuman spirit which these men frequently displayed. Of the nature of Voltaire's

attack on religion, some idea may be formed from the following passage, translated from a work in which he is highly eulogized—*De l'influence de la philosophie du 18e siècle, by E. Lerminer.* 'Voltaire felt that it was necessary to conquer or die; he courted kings and nobles, but was implacable towards his literary adversaries, and the knights of the Church, and of darkness. He gave them neither quarter nor mercy; he cut their throat in the breach. The moment he has overthrown the imprudent person who has offered himself to his blows, he insults and degrades him, strips him of his dignity, even if in the struggle he loses some of his own. He rallies in every tone and in every style. He mocks and outrages his adversary; he stuns him by his bitter and discordant clamours; he astounds, and stupifies him, and tortures him by the inexhaustible abundance of his insulting mockery. Still more closely does he press his enemy: grapples and chokes him, throws him in the dust, and rolls about with him; a mortal struggle ensues. Sometimes Voltaire appears vanquished, but he rises again; he thrusts into the very depth of the wounds he has given, his pitiless irony, as a cutting sword; he sings the pœan of victory, and increases by his vengeance his titles to immortality. Montesquieu carried, even into his pleasantry, a native majesty; Voltaire triumphed by his cynical spirit, by his fury, and by his revolting mockery, which is a corroding and deadly poison.'

The author of the article, *D'Alembert* in the *Penny Cyclopædia*, remarks —' When we blame the two latter (Diderot and Voltaire), it is not for the opinions they held, but for their offensive manner of expressing them, and the *odious intolerance* of all opinions except their own which runs through their writings. Men of the best and of the worst lives appeared to be equally offensive to them, if they professed Christianity.'

'Neither *Voltaire*, the master, nor *D'Alembert*, the disciple,' says Priestley, 'would have been much displeased if some mischief had befallen their enemies, and it would have given them some pleasure to have promoted it.' He then gives an illustration or two of this remark. 'There is,' says Voltaire, 'a friar, who has a farm on my estate at Tournay. He comes hither sometimes. I promise myself the pleasure of putting him in the pillory as soon as I am well; a pleasantry which philosophers may take with such priests, without being persecutors, as they are.' *D'Alembert* manifests a not dissimilar disposition. Of a letter by *Voltaire*, he says, 'I shed tears over it; I read it again and again, and concluded with wishing to see all the fanatics in the fire into which they wished to throw other people.' And the infidel King of Prussia, Frederic, says, in a letter to Voltaire, 'I would make the tonsured executioners who persecute you, disappear from the face of the earth, if it was in my power to effect it.' 'This,' adds Priestley, 'was not the sentiment of Christ or the apostles. Jesus exhorted his disciples to bless them that curse you, and to pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. And Paul advised his converts not to render evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good.'—*Priestley's Works*, vol. xvii. pp. 64-5. Voltaire himself has expressly declared what would be the nature of the toleration which philosophers would allow were they in power;—'they will render the fanatics abominable, and the superstitious ridiculous.'—Quoted in Priestley, *ut supra*.

'At the very commencement of his (Tycho Brahe) journey, however, an event occurred in which the impetuosity of his temper had nearly cost him his life. At a wedding-feast in Rostock, a questionable point in geometry involved him in a dispute with a Danish nobleman of the same temperament with himself; and the two

mathematicians resolved to settle the difference by the sword. Tycho, however, seems to have been second in the conflict, for he lost the greater part of his nose, and was obliged to supply its place by a substitute of gold and silver, which a cement of glue attached to his face.'

Sir D. Brewster's Life of Sir Isaac Newton, chap. x.

Note 5.—p. 96.

After this Discourse was written, my attention was more forcibly directed than it had been, to what is called 'The Religion of the New Moral World'; and I looked with considerable interest into it, as being a professed exhibition of the religion of Socialism; not without a hope that I might find, at least, an indirect recantation of some of Mr. Owen's grossest errors. There is, however, no brightening of the dark picture. The very title, 'Religion of the New Moral World,' is a misnomer. Religion is either the sentiment which binds the human heart to a Primary Creative Intelligence, or it is 'The Whole Duty of Man,' deduced from the relations which he sustains to that Intelligence. Of neither of these things is one word said in the piece. Its 'Religion' is nothing more than a transcript of Socialist morality—a transcript, designated by the name of religion, for reasons best understood by the party whence the confession of *faith* (!) proceeded.

From this publication I learn, that the existence even of an 'unknown cause' is nothing but a 'probable conjecture,' for I read in it—'Human knowledge is not sufficiently advanced to enable the children of the New Moral World to express more than *probable conjectures* respecting the Supreme Power of the universe.' Among, however, the modest 'conjectures' of this exposition, one is, that the 'attributes' of the 'unknown cause' are probably '*those laws of nature* by which, at all times,

in all places, the operations of the universe are incessantly continued.' The knowledge which Socialism exhibits of the nature of evidence, and the grounds of our intellectual and moral knowledge, may also be gathered from the profound remark, that 'man knows the forms and qualities of those existences around him, only so far as *his senses have been made to perceive them.*' What form or what quality of 'the existences around him' did Mr. Owen ever learn from the exclusive operation of his senses? Such a writer requires to be put into the Horn Book of intellectual science. And yet this is the person, who is to overturn and re-construct society all over the world! Surely, however, the Socialist doubter departs from the modesty of 'probable conjecture,' and rivals the dogmatic assumption of the boldest *à priori* sophist of ancient and modern times, when he says—'That if this Power had desired to make the nature of its existence known to man, it would have enabled him to comprehend it without mystery or doubt.' Yet Mr. Owen, in other publications, declares it to be an impossibility for the finite to comprehend the infinite. Now, however, not only is this impossibility denied by implication, but Mr. Owen, in some way, has got to know what the unknown Power—'it is of no importance whether men call it matter or spirit'—to know what this unknown matter or unknown spirit, 'would have' done, had it 'desired' a certain result,—'tanquam modo ex deorum concilio, et ex Epicuri intermundiis descendisset,' as if, like Mahomet, he had just come down to earth from the council-chamber of his unknown power, whose attributes are the laws of nature!

But the writer is by no means sure—it is unbecoming a Socialist philosopher to be *sure* of any thing, but of the omnipotence of circumstances, and that man is 'the chief of animals'—whether there be one or more

unknown causes, for I read, 'the creating power or *powers* (how many?) will be universally called God in the New Moral World.' This looks like an approach to the 'superstition,' of 'the old, irrational world,'—but why will it or they be so designated? Has, then, Socialism 'found out' the Deity? By no means. The designation is a mere conventionalism; and surely such a resource is unworthy the dignity of a philosophy which is so strict in its modes of enquiry as to abjure every thing but what man's 'senses have been made to perceive.' As, however, 'names alter nothing'—so may the name God be used if convenient (for what? to allure the unwary?). These are the assigned reasons for adopting the name without the idea,—'for the *convenience* of discourse'—(why discourse about the unknown?) and 'the term God is, perhaps, as unexceptionable for this purpose as any that can be employed, *because it has the recommendation of general use in its favour.*'

It has been asserted by Socialists that their system is independent of any particular opinions as to religion, and, consequently, that it should be considered apart from any reference whatever to the subject. Some of Mr. Owen's adherents may be of this way of thinking; others boldly proclaim themselves the unsparing foes of religion, especially of Christianity; but respecting Mr. Owen's own ideas in this matter there is no room for doubt. It would be easy to increase the evidence supplied in the Lectures themselves,—but the following will suffice:—In 1820, Mr. Owen gave a challenge 'to the Clergy of New Orleans,' in which he says 'I have now finished a course of lectures in this city, the principles of which *are in direct opposition* to those which you have been taught it your duty to preach.' 'I propose to prove (in the discussion), as I have already attempted to do in my lectures, that *all the religions of*

the world have been founded on the ignorance of mankind; that they are directly opposed to the never-changing laws of our nature; that they have been, and are the real source of vice, disunion, and misery of every description; that they are now the only real bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, of charity, in its most extended sense, and of sincerity and kindness among the whole human family; and that they can be no longer maintained except through the ignorance of the mass of the people, and the tyranny of the few over that mass.'

NOTE 6.—p. 120.

The Five Fundamental Facts which constitute the Social philosophy of the formation of character, are as follows: extracted from '*The Social Bible*, by Robert Owen.'

'1st. That man is a *compound being*, whose character is formed of his constitution or organisation at birth, and of the effects of external circumstances upon it, from birth to death; such original organisation and external influences continually acting and re-acting each upon the other.

'2nd. That man is compelled by his original constitution to receive his *feelings* and his *convictions* independent of his *will*.

'3rd. That his *feelings*, or his *convictions*, or both of them united, create the motive to action called the *will*, which stimulates him to act, and decides his actions.

'4th. That the organisation of no two human beings is ever precisely similar at birth, nor can art subsequently form any two individuals, from infancy to maturity, to be the same.

'5th. That nevertheless the constitution of every infant, except in case of organic disease, is capable of being formed or matured either into a *very inferior* or a *very*

superior being, according to the qualities of the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth.'

By the first it appears that character consists of the 'organisation at birth,' and of 'the effects of external circumstances,' which two influences the second and third fact represent as giving rise to all that man is, namely, his 'feelings,' his 'convictions,' his 'will,' and his 'actions.' Man, then, is formed of his 'organisation *at birth*,' and 'external circumstances.' It must be noticed that no influence whatever is ascribed to his organisation *at any other period*. It is 'organisation at birth' on which circumstances act, and it is this same 'organisation at birth' which reacts on 'external circumstances.' What is this but to make 'external circumstances' the sole creator of the lot of man? At birth there is no mental or moral development. The mental and moral capacities are latent. Even the senses are unopened and uneducated. The new-born infant, in regard to actual power, is in a condition inferior to that of the young of animals, alive only to the sensations of internal pleasure or pain, and the influence of 'external circumstances.' Whatever, therefore, the child becomes is not owing in any degree to internal capabilities, but to 'external circumstances.' They make him all that in any future period of his life he may prove to be, and they make him such by an irresistible necessity, for man 'is compelled by his original constitution'—by this 'organisation at birth'—'to receive his feelings and his convictions'—and 'his feelings or his convictions, or both of them united, create the motive to action, called the will, which stimulates him to act and decides his actions.' Could a lower description be given of the origin and formation of the powers of any brute animal? Mind, in this system, goes for nothing. It is not taken into the account: it has no independent existence. Can

it be said to have any existence at all? Whatever ensues is the creation of circumstances acting on his merely animal 'organisation at birth.' Whether or not, however, mind is admitted by this sage philosophy, it is obviously nothing more than the blind, passive subject, offspring, and slave of 'external circumstances.'

These remarks are made, not merely to add another exhibition of the absurdity, the low and degrading sensualism of this revolutionising doctrine, but also to show that in the lecture on the subject, I have not confuted a shadow of my own imagination. My belief is, indeed, that in placing the main issue on the question as to which is the predominant influence in the formation of man's lot, matter or mind, the world within or the world without the breast, I have rather given Socialism an undeserved advantage.

As Mr. Owen assumes the character of a philosopher, he must not be dissatisfied if I add that, in his second 'Fact,' he would have stated his own doctrine more correctly, if, instead of 'independently,' he had said that man 'is compelled to receive his feelings and his convictions' *anteriorly* 'to his will'; for it is obviously his notion that man's will is not independent, but the result, the creation of his feelings and convictions. But this is only one among many proofs of Mr. Owen's inability to write with precision on his favorite topics.

I have had occasion to remark, more than once, that Mr. Owen states, but does not prove, his 'Facts and Laws.' The fourth 'Fact' presents as clear an instance of gratuitous assumption, taking him on his own principles, as the most dogmatic school of philosophy, or the most implicit superstition can present. 'The organisation of no two human beings is ever precisely the same at birth.' How can Mr. Owen know this? Appearances, at least, are against him, even if by organisation he should be pleased to mean nothing more than

the outward members of the body: in all cases they are substantially the same. As to the internal organisation, who knows or can know any thing of it, except, indeed, the anatomist. But what can he teach Mr. Owen in regard to the latent elements of character? In respect of these there is 'at birth' no manifestation whatever. The time, then, has not come to judge of what they are; and when the time has come for other men to form an opinion, Mr. Owen is without the means, for every thing but 'the organisation at birth,' has, according to him, been created by circumstances in such a way that the human being has been 'compelled to receive' all that has been superadded to his 'organisation at birth.'

If any doubt could after this remain of the nature and extent of the power which Owenism ascribes to 'external circumstances,' a reference to the fifth 'Fact' would dissipate it, for there the formation of the character, whatever it prove, whether 'a very inferior or a very superior being,' is exclusively ascribed to the operation of 'the external circumstances allowed to influence that constitution from birth.' For myself, therefore, I cannot see, so far as Owenism goes, why its 'Father' should not form a superior being out of an idiotic, as well as any other infant. It has its organisation at birth for external circumstances to act upon, and, as Owenism takes the organisation at birth for one element of character, it has no means of knowing whether the rudiments of mind are in the infant or not; idiotcy does not always show itself at birth by signs of 'organic disease,' and 'organic disease,' is the only exception made to the universal 'Fact.'

Note 7.—p. 173.

To the instances given and referred to in the text, of the esteem in which unbelievers have held the character of our Lord, I add the following, taken from '*An*

Enquiry concerning the origin of Christianity, by Charles C. Hennell,'—a work which serves to show that all the resources of a perverted ingenuity can do little more than display the wish to injure the basis on which the Christian's faith and hopes repose. As *a telum imbelle sine ictu*, the book is not unworthy of the theological student's notice.

'Whatever be the spirit with which the four Gospels be approached, it is impossible to rise from the attentive perusal of them without a strong veneration for Jesus Christ. Even the disposition to cavil and ridicule is forced to retire before the majestic simplicity of the Prophet of Nazareth. Unlike Moses or Mahomet, he owes no part of the lustre which surrounds him to his acquisition of temporal power: his is the ascendancy which mankind, in proportion to their mental advancement, are least disposed to resist—that of moral and intellectual greatness. Besides, his cruel fate engages men's affections on his behalf, and gives him an additional hold upon their allegiance. 'A virtuous reformer and sage, martyred by crafty priests and brutal soldiers, is a spectacle which forces men to gaze in pity and admiration. The precepts from such a source come with an authority which no human laws could give; and Jesus is more powerful on the cross of Calvary, than he would have been on the throne of Israel!'

Note 8.—p. 148.

It may serve to throw light on the language and tone which I have occasionally employed, in describing the anti-religious and anti-social tendencies of *Socialism*, if I here collect a few of the flowers of speech which Socialist writers scatter abundantly in their writings:—

'Now almost all who are in the married state are daily and hourly practising the deepest deception, and

living in the grossest prostitution of body and mind.' 'The marriages of the world—this accursed thing—are the sole cause of all the prostitution, and of more than one half of all the vilest and most degrading crimes known to society.' 'It is a Satanic device of the Priesthood to place and keep mankind within their slavish superstitions.' 'Real genuine chastity is a sentiment and a feeling far too elevated and refined for their (the Priesthood) ignorant and gross conceptions, or they could never have artificially tied bodies in their bonds of wedlock, and then said—"Be you united, mind and body for life, or be miserable in this world, and everlastingly damned in the next."' 'The children within those dens ('single families') of selfishness and hypocrisy.' 'The whole of these single family proceedings, from their commencement to their dissolution by the death of the parent, are one continued compound of absurdity, folly, and wickedness, daily added to wickedness, absurdity, and folly.' 'The consequence of the doctrine that man has the power to believe and feel as he pleases, has kept the human race in a state of barbarism under different forms, more or less brutal, and made the earth one scene of deception, hatred, and violence, a place of torment, a pandemonium.' 'The books, made to contain these so called revelations, from an unknown supreme power, although written, some by cunning, and others by very ordinary-minded men, were called *sacred* and *divine*; terms invented to impose on the ignorant multitude by those more learned, who first used them to deceive, and, if possible, to enforce a blind belief upon all succeeding generations in these infantine tales, that they might be received, without thought or reflexion, as unerringly true.' 'These so called civil professions ('divines, lawyers, and medical men') are real enemies, and formidable ones too, to the human race. They destroy the minds

and morals of all, and materially injure the health of all; they are, in fact, the cause of all the deception and hypocrisy which spoil the human character, and make the earth a pandemonium.' 'Religion and war have not only existed together, but they have mutually supported each other.' 'Servants and slaves, or operatives, are, under existing arrangements, the efficient producers of all that is usefully produced, and doers of all that is usefully done.' 'Religion—a name under which are daily perpetrated the most melancholy and horrid evils throughout all the nations of the earth.'

All these—it would be easy to multiply instances—some too revolting to be transcribed—are the words of Mr. Owen himself. Repeatedly does he charge the world with insanity;—who is insane? If numbers are to determine, Mr. Owen's chance of acquittal is not very great. Yet monstrosities like the foregoing, are propagated with a burning zeal, and received with implicit credence. We proceed with our *Florilegium Owense*. 'Now, if I prove that there is no wisdom in it (the Bible), neither finite nor infinite; that so far from wisdom it is a mass of gross ignorance and despicable nonsense—if, I say, I prove this, then it must follow that it is not the word of God; that it is not a production of infinite wisdom; and that therefore you (the Clergy) in telling the human race that it is, are telling them a downright falsehood.'—*Haslam*. 'The Bible is a mass of dirty trash and blasphemous nonsense.'—*Id.* It (the sale of his Letters to the Clergy) shows to me that human beings are at last disposed to cleanse their minds from the grossness and filth which have so long filled them, and that they will no longer submit to the delusions of men calling themselves ministers of the gospel, nor to the impositions and plunderings of men calling themselves governments.'—*Id.*

'But thanks to the Sovereignty of Knowledge, we

have no fear that these *spiritual* houses—these artificial nuisances—will continue, when ignorance, or the necessity that gave birth to them, has ceased to exist. Already has the fiat gone forth, and the fabric of folly and of superstition totters to its base.'—*Horton.* 'Community—the only real and substantial *salvation.* And it will be *eternal* too, for when once it begins, there will be no end to it.'—*Id.* 'But, says the *pious maniac*—"look not to the things that are seen and temporal,"' &c.—*Id.* 'They (Socialists) would die as they had lived, happy in the proud consciousness of their own *worth.*' (Yet merit and demerit are denied!)—*Id.* 'If we refer to the annals of this, or any other Christian community, we shall find that all the evil, bloodshed, and confusion, by which the page of history is stained, are easily traceable to the domination of the Christian church.'—*Id.* 'It never has done good, and has always done harm, and ever will, so long as it exists. Wherever Christianity has found its way, slavery and oppression have followed in the rear.'—*Id.* 'The nonsense contained in the book called the New Testament.'—*Id.* 'And if even there should be a future tribunal, I would rest my claims on the favour of heaven on the fact, that I had spurned that absurd, unjust, and immoral book as a libel upon the immutable Godhead.' 'If men are either dishonest or poor, it is the operation of the monstrous and iniquitous Christian system of religion, morals, and politics that has made them so.'—*Id.* 'That man (Mr. Owen) who, above all others, seems worthy of being called the benefactor and *real* saviour of the human race.'—*Id.*

'After an inquiry into their (the Christian world) acts and deeds, past and present, the inevitable answer is, that they are rank hypocrites and practical scoffers; shepherds and flocks alike proving themselves to be, *in the lump,* as free from Christianity as Pagans, who never heard the word Christ uttered.'—*New Moral World,*

No. 208. 'What does it avail to tell the clergy that they teach pestiferous and impoverishing errors? They know it better than it can be told them. What does it avail to tell them that they are a besotted, voluptuous, carnal-minded set of "miserable sinners"? They to whom these epithets apply, make a merit of the acknowledgment; it is one of the tricks of their trade.'—*Id.* 'And in this new world there will be no marriages of the priest, or giving in marriage.'—*Owen.* 'It will be more in accordance with common sense and with virtue, for NATURE, when man and woman shall be trained to be rational creatures, to direct her own proceedings, and to decide upon her own operations' (in regard to the continuation of the human species).—*Id.* 'Then will NATURE not be interrupted in her wise course by man's inexperience, and the intercourse of the sexes will be solely under the guidance of NATURE, and not of the priests' irrational devices and laws.'—*Id.* 'There are many parties in the country waiting anxiously for our commencing operations; but it would be quite useless for us to begin, until the subject of *marriage*, private property, and *religion* be properly understood by those about to enter upon a rational state of society. Many persons conceive that nothing can be easier than to establish a community; but no community has yet been begun which did not consist of married couples. I have known from the first that *no such practice could succeed*, as the interest of private families is quite opposed to that of a number of equally free and intelligent individuals.'—*Id.* Yet with this knowledge Mr. Owen is, at the present moment, inducing persons to 'go into community.' Are 'married couples' to be altogether refused, or is the wife to be previously dismissed?

FINIS.

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